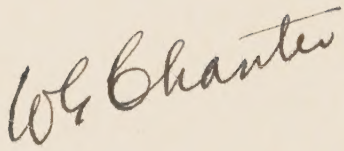

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

The
Co.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

BY

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TO

MY MOTHER

FROM WHOSE LESSONS AND WHOSE LIFE

I HAVE DRAWN ALL THE REAL RELIGION

THAT I KNOW OR NEED

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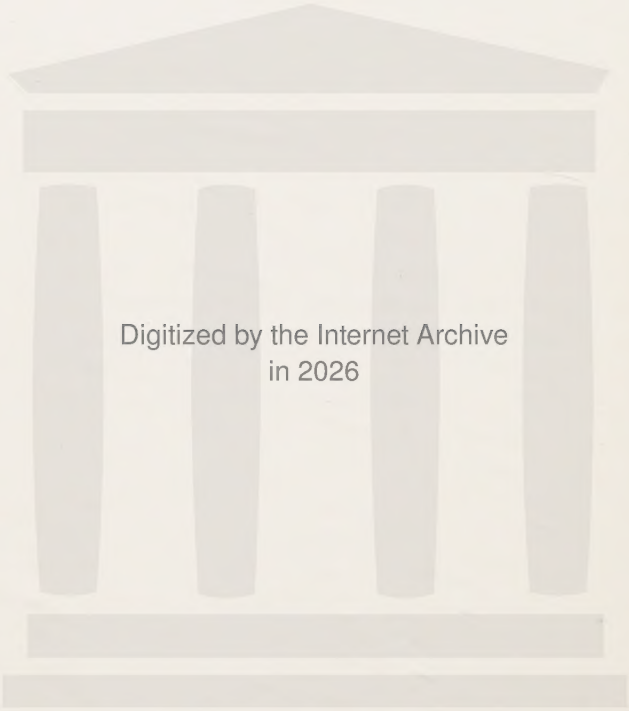
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PREFACE

Although the psychology of religion is still exceedingly young, much valuable work has already been done on several aspects of the religious consciousness, such as conversion, mysticism, certain abnormal phenomena, etc.; but the important question of religious belief, from the psychological point of view, has received but scant attention. To help break ground in this rich but rather neglected field is the aim of the present work. It does not concern itself with the nature or the definition of religion, — a question that has resulted in so much smoke and so little light, — but is limited to the much more modest and concrete problem of the nature of belief in a God or gods and the basis or bases on which this belief really rests.

In order to attain a comprehensive view of this subject, I have not confined myself to psychology, but have made what use I could of the results of anthropology and the history of religion. How far I have succeeded in combining these rather diverse fields, so that they might lend each other mutual assistance in throwing light on our question, must be left to the reader to determine.

My aim has been to write for both the technical and the general reader; in fact, respecting many

things, my eye has been on the interests of the latter even more than on those of the former. In spite of this, it may be that the discussions in the early part of the book will seem to some unnecessarily technical. But at any rate I can assure the reader that if he can worry through Chapter I, he need have nothing to fear from the remaining chapters; they may prove uninteresting and unprofitable, but at least they will be clear.

It is impossible in this place to make suitable acknowledgment to all those who, in one way or another, have aided me in the preparation of this book. I must not, however, neglect at least to mention those who so kindly helped me in the distribution of my *questionnaire* — especially my mother, without whose assistance the number of my responses, far too small as it is, would have been reduced by a substantial percentage. My thanks are also due to the editors of the *Psychological Review* and of the *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education* for their courtesy in permitting me to make use (in Chapters I and VIII) of material which I published in their journals during the past year. To Professor G. F. Moore of Harvard I am deeply indebted for advice on the historical part of my work. I am also glad of this opportunity to make mention of Professor John E. Russell of Williams College, the Rev. R. Lew Williams of Elmira, and Mr. Percival Henry Truman of Chicago, all of whom read my manuscript and aided me with their wise

suggestions. To the kindly criticisms of Mr. Truman, especially, this book owes a great deal.

But most of all am I indebted to the assistance and inspiration of Professor William James. How deeply his "Varieties of Religious Experience" has influenced my thought will be patent to every reader of this book. His "Principles of Psychology" and his "Will to Believe" have been only less influential, while to his lectures and to personal contact with him I owe even more than to his writings. I esteem it a privilege that I have an opportunity thus publicly to acknowledge a debt I can never repay.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS,
December 19, 1906.

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PART I

PSYCHOLOGICAL

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

CHAPTER I

THE ELEMENTS OF PSYCHIC LIFE [1]

If an inhabitant of Mars (which let us suppose for the moment is an atheistic planet) should suddenly be transported to our earth and should make a tour of inspection, we may imagine his feelings of surprise and wonder at all sorts of institutions and ideas that would for the first time come under his ken. If, for instance, he should land from his aërial car in America and should start his studies by investigating our country and our institutions, he would be struck, we may well suppose, with our mountains and rivers, with the rush of our great cities and our business enterprise, and he would study with surprised interest the wonders of steam and electricity, the feats of engineering, the marvels of applied mechanics, and the beauties and freaks of our art. But the one thing, I apprehend, which would fill him with amazement beyond all others would be the striking discovery that the inhabitants of this great

[1] A portion of this chapter appeared, in somewhat different form, in the *Psychological Review* for January, 1906.

land, almost to a man, believed, and with a good deal of firmness, in a being whom no man had ever seen or hoped to see, whose nature they could but dimly conceive, yet whom they must worship and love, — and whom (for want, apparently, of a better name) they called "God."

If our imaginary Martian should travel to other lands, his amazement at this fact would only increase. On leaving America and Europe and pushing his way into Asia and Africa, he would gradually say farewell to steam and electricity; the sail-boat and canoe would take the place of the steamship, the horse and the camel would be substituted for the express train, and the Bushman's hut and the hollow tree would replace the sky-scraper and the palace; languages and dress, habits of mind and grades of intelligence and of morality, would change with the latitude and longitude; but go where he might, in Polynesia no less than in Rome and in New York, he would everywhere be confronted with the same firm belief in some kind of superhuman being whom one must worship, supplicate, and adore.

If now to discover the origin of this strange phenomenon he should betake himself to the study of history, he would learn with increasing astonishment, that history knew no more of the origin of this belief than he; because, as far back as she can go, not a race nor tribe is to be met with, no matter how primitive its ideas and its customs, that has been without this belief. Most other human ideas and institu-

tions, he would find, change with the century as well as with the latitude; but this belief in something which man insists upon calling divine, though constantly altering its form and its expression, would seem to him, after he had finished his investigations, to be one of the few things as natural to man as breathing.

The surprise of our hypothetical visitor is something that we well may share. This universality in belief, this *consensus gentium*, has seemed to many a reflective mind full of significance, and at the least is surely one of the most striking of the many odd facts that characterize this strange creature we call man. It is not my purpose, however, to discuss the objective significance of this fact, but to treat it purely from the psychological point of view. Why do men believe as they do? On what does this belief actually rest? From what does it draw its strength, and in what region of our psychic life is it mainly intrenched? In short, what are the psychological bases of religious belief? These are questions of the utmost importance, not only to the psychologist and the sociologist, but still more to the minister, the teacher, and the lover of men. And these are the questions which I wish to discuss in the following pages.

For a thorough and satisfactory investigation of this subject we must have recourse to several different fields of inquiry. And first of all, to lay a foundation for the rest of our work, we must now take up

what I fear may prove a rather dry study of certain psychological facts. But let the reader be of good cheer and undiscouraged by this first necessary labor of breaking ground; for in due season, I trust, we shall reap if we faint not.

I

Recent discussions on the psychology of religion have centered attention on the relative importance and value of the "center" as against the "fringe" of consciousness; of the closely reasoned product of articulate thought, on the one hand, and of the unreasoned intuitional or emotional product of feeling on the other. The antithesis thus suggested is important and points the way, I believe, to a distinction among the elements of psychic life more fundamental and more fruitful than the traditional tripartite division.[1] As the whole of this book will be largely concerned with the relative value in

[1] The traditional classification of consciousness into knowing, feeling, and willing is useful for a rough and practical view of the mind, but is unsatisfactory as an exact analysis. If we are seeking for the primary constituents of psychic life which are not further analyzable, if, so to speak, we take a cross section of consciousness and look at it endwise to note the various threads that constitute it, we shall not find will an element in the same sense in which feeling and knowing are elements. In fact, strictly speaking, will is not an element at all. If we take up a writer like Sully, who maintains the elementary character of conation, and read his description of it, the effect is bewildering. One hundred and fifty pages are given to the subject, and a great mass of psychic material is included under the term "conation"; but all this material turns

religious belief of these two phases of consciousness, — the clear presentation of thought and the non-rational feeling or instinctive intuition, — it will be well for us at the outset to examine them in some detail, and before dealing with their influence on religion to see what relation each bears to life in general.

If, then, we submit consciousness to a minute, analytic survey, we shall find, I repeat, two chief divisions, two principal kinds of psychic stuff. One of these consists of the definite, describable, communicable elements of consciousness; the rational, the cognitive, the representative; the material,

out to be ultimately either sensation or ideation or feeling; and the will itself, or conation, as distinct from the other psychical elements, always eludes our grasp. The truth is, if you look for will as an element, you can never find it; for it is a compound — the most inclusive of all psychic compounds. It is a matter of the succession of states of consciousness and is not to be found in any cross section of the stream. You can never single it out from its psychic content, as you can feeling, and say, This is pure will. You can never put your finger on it. It is no more a given *matter* which you *find* than association is. Will and association *occur;* they are not given. They are processes, not elements. To include will in an enumeration of the elements of psychic life is like saying the competitors in a race were A, B, C, and swiftness; or like speaking of the circulatory system as containing venous blood, arterial blood, and circulation.

In saying this I do not wish to be interpreted as denying the primacy of volitional, conative life. The whole stream of consciousness may very well be considered a matter of conation; my point is that no one element of it alone can be called conation, to the exclusion of the rest. Activity is a very real thing, but psychological analysis never finds it except in terms of feeling, sensation, etc., all of which it combines with itself.

which may be made public property by means of scientific and exact description. The other class is made up of the indefinite, the indescribable, the peculiarly private mass of subjective experiences which, by their very nature, are not susceptible of communication, and which to be exactly described must be made over so as to lose their characteristic quality and cease to be what they were; the conscious material that refers to nothing but itself, has no outer reference, does not pretend to be representative, stands for itself alone.[1]

As the student of Greek psychology will see, the dual classification here suggested is in line with Aristotle's division of mind into thought and desire. And our first great class, the rational or cognitive, naturally falls apart, as did his, into two subdivisions; namely, ideation and sensory experience. For although both of these belong to the describable, communicable part of our psychic life, the differences between them are great and must not be overlooked. Not only do they differ in their physiological causes;

[1] Professor Baldwin makes almost the same distinction, for, though retaining the old tripartite division, he includes under feeling all that I have placed in my second or non-cognitive division. This, however, Baldwin does not consider as including only a part of the totality of psychical material (as I have above), but rather as merely one aspect of experience as a whole. The same mental object may be from one point of view affective, from another cognitive. He defines feeling in this broad sense as "the subjective side of any modification whatever of consciousness, or . . . the simple awareness of consciousness" ("Feeling and Will," p. 85).

they differ also in character. As compared with sense perceptions, mental images are uniformly pale, incomplete, poor in content, and fleeting. Nor does this fully state the difference. Images and perceptions may vary, according to Professor Münsterberg, in three ways; namely, in quality, intensity, and vividness. Will any or all of these variations combined account for the difference between a perception and its corresponding image? Compare the sensation of a gray color to which we pay little attention, and the memory image of it to which we pay much attention. The difference is great; but it is not a difference of vividness, nor of intensity, nor of quality. It is due rather to the presence of something new in kind and is sufficiently great to warrant us in considering sensation and idea, as suggested above, two perfectly distinct divisions within the larger class of the cognitive and communicable.

The second division in the dual classification which we have adopted is less easily analyzed into subdivisions because more amorphous in its nature. We may, however, distinguish within it two kinds of psychic material sufficiently distinct to be kept apart, at least ideally; namely, feeling and what is known as the phenomena of the background. What I mean by these latter will be sufficiently clear to all students of psychology.[1] Common examples are double images, visual impressions outside the center of vision,

[1] Cf. especially James, "Principles of Psychology," Vol. I, pp. 240–264.

the ticking of the clock to which we pay no attention, the whirring of the mill wheels in the miller's ears, or the roar of the ocean in those of the sailor. These things are in the background or fringe region. They are not noetic, objective, defined, and communicable, but subjective and private. As soon as we fix attention upon them and thus take them out of the fringe region, they become noetic and communicable, but not till then. That we are really conscious of them before fixing our attention upon them — *i.e.* that they belong to the fringe and are not purely physiological and unconscious — is shown by the fact that we notice their cessation. If the clock which we did not "hear" suddenly stops, we feel that something has happened; our total consciousness undergoes a change. Thus, while still in the fringe region and while as yet unnoticed and unknown, they have an effect upon the general tone of our consciousness, they color our life — and this not in an intellectual, but in an affective way. In this conscious background belong also the fringes which weave themselves about our clearest ideas; "feelings of tendency"; the vague meanings which are yet no meanings, and which are neither ideas nor feelings; the facts of subconscious mental activity which cannot be denied, — in short, all that heterogeneous mass of rich, subjective, psychic material which surrounds the clearly illuminated focal point of consciousness and owing to its indefinite nature is not susceptible of scientific description. For consciousness cannot be adequately

represented by a geometrical point without extension and with no varying grades of intensity, but should rather be symbolized by the field of vision,[1] which has a focal point of clearest sight and a marginal field extending out from the center indefinitely, with no clearly marked outer limit.[2]

If the classification which we have adopted is cor-

[1] Cf. Wundt, "Grundzüge der Physiolog. Psychologie," Vol. II, p. 267 f.; also Baldwin, "Senses and Intellect," pp. 63–65, and diagram (p. 68, note) of the field of consciousness in four concentric circles illustrating respectively apperception, attention, diffused consciousness, and the subconscious, the last being encircled by the unconscious (physiological).

[2] This is, of course, the common conception of consciousness. It is most directly combated in an excellent article by Dr. Irving King ("The Problem of the Subconscious," *Psychological Review*, January, 1906), "As far as a conscious process is concerned," writes Dr. King, "it may be said to be best symbolized, for purposes of description, as a point. It does not have extent, neither does it consist of parts, so that, at any moment, it cannot be said to contain elements of varying intensity. Although it may be true that objects do in varying degrees affect consciousness, or that many objects may be in consciousness at a given instant, it does not follow that it itself is composed of states of varying intensities, or that it could be represented, for instance, by a circle of gray, the center of which is white and the circumference black, with all intermediate shades of gray between these extremes. That is to say, consciousness does not shade off gradually into unconsciousness. It either exists or it does not exist; it may be more intense at one moment than at another. It may even at some moments be said to be at a minimum. But at any one moment it is, for purposes of description, a unitary existence without parts which might be thought as clustering about a center with different degrees of intensity and adhesion. That is to say, the 'fringe' conception does not describe a characteristic of the edge of consciousness, in the sense that any conscious state possesses a psychic

rect, this fringe region, it will be observed, is much more closely related to feeling than to either ideation or sensation. Between the most clearly differentiated feeling and the vague background there is no cleft but a steady decrease of differentiation in which no line can be drawn. All pleasure-pains, all feelings of tension and relief, of excitement and depression (if we adopt Wundt's classification), have the same lack of clear-cut outlines, the same irrational and private nature, the same subjective and non-representative quality, that characterize the background. "You can know what I know and you can will what I will, but you cannot by any possibility feel what I feel; this is subjectivity, this peculiar and unapproachable isolation of one consciousness from another." [1] Höffding defines feeling as "that

halo; it rather symbolically represents the fact that the *point of consciousness* is modified by outlying neural processes as well as by those most directly concerned in effecting the required adjustment." I must say frankly that in my own experience I fail to find anything that corresponds to this description. Dr. King seems to me to have described a hypothetical entity which, at any rate, is most unlike the *content* of consciousness. And if we admit (as Dr. King seems in another connection to do) that Professor James is right in identifying consciousness and its content, introspection would seem to show that consciousness is no such "unitary existence without parts," as Dr. King maintains, but that it is "composed of states of varying intensities" and that its parts cluster "about a center with different degrees of intensity and adhesion" — in short that it is best represented, as suggested above, by a field of vision, and that the fringe is a real psychic (not merely neural) fact.

[1] Baldwin, "Feeling and Will," p. 85.

in our inward states which cannot by any possibility become an element of a percept or of an image. It is an inward illumination which falls on the stream of sensations and ideas." [1] If this view be the true one (and I believe it is), feeling will be seen to be very intimately related to the indescribable, non-rational phenomena of the background. It is true that both for feeling and for these other experiences, by an artificial transformation, sensations may in a sense be substituted; but when this substitution has been made, the real feeling and the real background phenomena have vanished.[2] There is in every complex which involves either of these a factor which simply is not to be objectified or described. So far as accurate, scientific description is concerned, psychology must here "throw up the sponge." In this respect, feeling and the fringe experience differ *in toto* from sensation and ideation.[3]

[1] Höffding, "Outlines of Psychology," p. 89.

[2] Cf. Royce, "Outlines of Psychology," pp. 107–112.

[3] In an article in the *Psychological Review* (January, 1906), on which this chapter is largely based, I overemphasized the close relationship between feeling and the fringe, making no clear distinction between the two and proposing that the term "feeling" be used for both. The suggestions of my friend Mr. Truman and further thought of my own upon the matter have led me to modify this formulation of the subject, as indicated in the text. Though feeling and the fringe region are closely related, they should not be identified; for such a course would not only have the effect of confusing still more the whole vexed problem of feeling (which is already perhaps the most confused and obscure problem in psychology); but it would also ignore the fact that certain feelings

Feeling and the background, therefore, although clearly distinguishable, are, as I have indicated from the outset, very closely related. Together they form the second of the two great divisions in our classification of psychic elements. In the following pages I shall refer to this division of non-rational and non-cognitive fringe and feeling phenomena as the "feeling background," or the "feeling mass," or some equivalent expression.

The character of our first great division of psychic elements — ideation and sensory experience — is clear enough, being described in detail by all text-books on psychology. The second division of our classification, however, is not dealt with so generally nor so carefully by psychologists. For this reason, therefore, and also because of its important bearing on the religious life, it demands from us especial study. What, then, more in detail, are the characteristics of this vast feeling background?

First of all should be mentioned its intimate and direct relation to the life of the organism. Sensation and ideation relate us to the outer world removed from us by time and space; the feeling mass of which I speak is indissolubly connected with our vital functions. So far as we are conscious of these functions at all, that consciousness belongs mainly to the affective life. Cœnæsthesia — as the German term

(*e.g.* intense pleasure-pain) sometimes reach the center of attention. The two must therefore be distinguished, though their close relationship must always be kept in mind.

Gemeingefühl implies — is a matter of feeling, in the broad sense. The conscious rhythms of the bodily processes — especially as indicating healthy or unhealthy conditions of the organism — are summed in this common marginal feeling.[1] In short, we may say that ideation is man's consciousness so far as he is a rational being; the affective background is his consciousness so far as he is a living organism. It is this which is in connection with our vital needs. The instinctive desires and impulses have their roots in it, and get their power from it; the inborn reactions upon the environment, so far as they are conscious, the native antipathies and tendencies, our deepest loves and hates — all these are parts of it and grow up out of it. In fact, so inextricably bound up is it with life and all that life means, that it might well be called the *vital* background.

This vital background seems to be the primary form of consciousness.[2] In all probability the lower

[1] "Gemeingefühl ist die 'Resultante der sinnlichen Gefühle' (Wundt), das 'Totalgefühl in welchem der gesamte Zustand unseres sinnlichen Wohl- oder Übelbefindens zum Ausdruck kommt' (Höffding). Seine wichtigsten Bestandtheile sind, über den deutlicher localisirten Muskel- und Organempfindungen, die völlig unbestimmten Totalempfindungen, ein Conglomerat von betonten, aber meist nicht sehr starken Gefühlen, welche ihre Ursprung in inneren Veränderungen unserer Organe haben (Ziegler)." — Elsenhaus, "Ueber Verallgemeinerung der Gefühle," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, XXIV, 203.

[2] "The original awareness of consciousness is an affective state, and as consciousness is the form of all subjectivity, so sensibility, feeling, is its first content." Baldwin, "Feeling and Will," p. 84.

forms of conscious life have little besides this. Ideation would seem to belong exclusively to the highest vertebrates, and sensation also becomes less varied and less definite as we work down in the scale of consciousness. Our "lower" senses have the most *feeling* (in the broad sense) and the intellectual ones the least, and, as Ward points out, our organic sensations, which seem to come nearest to those of the mollusk, lack almost any assignable quale. The infant's consciousness is void of what *we* know as sensations and ideas;[1] it is a "buzzing blooming confusion." "In place of the many things which we now see and hear," says Ward, "not merely would there then be [*i.e.* in the infant's consciousness] a confused presentation of the whole field of vision and a mass of undistinguishable sounds, but even the difference between sights and sounds themselves would be without its present distinctness. Thus, the farther back we go, the nearer we approach to a total presentation having the character of one general *continuum* in which differences are latent."[2]

Out of this "continuum," this matrix, this original

[1] "All it has at first is feeling, and feeling of one kind. This feeling has no meaning whatever, of any kind." "Feeling and Will," p. 150.

[2] Encyclopædia Britannica, article "Psychology." It will be noticed that in adopting Ward's view of the primitive consciousness instead of Spencer's or Stanley's I have avoided those difficulties which Höffding, Tawny, and others urge against the possibility of feeling in the narrower sense being the original form of psychic life.

chaos, big with all the possibilities of conscious life, are gradually differentiated the various forms of sensation and of ideation. Consciousness is not put together from sensations ready made by the outside world; but, from the comparatively homogeneous mass of the feeling background, certain pulses of psychic life more prominent than the rest become more definite, more distinct, and by a gradual process evolve into sensations.[1] The same is true of the differentiation of ideas. The process seems analogous to that of biological evolution, and might very well be described by Spencer's famous definition — "a progress from indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to definite, coherent heterogeneity, through successive differentiations and integrations."

[1] Cf. a recent article by Dr. A. E. Davies entitled "An Analysis of Elementary Psychic Processes" (*Psychological Review*, XII, 166–206), based upon experiments in light perception, in the laboratory of the Ohio State University. Dr. Davies holds that the elementary psychic processes are not cognitive, but rather of the nature of feeling. The first stage of a perceptive process is vague, indefinite, and not to be described further than by saying that it belongs to the affective, rather than to the cognitive life. One of his subjects expresses what seems to have been the common experience of them all by saying, "My *feeling* for the illumination came before my *perception* of the object." The conclusion to which Dr. Davies comes he expresses thus, "Our most elementary psychic processes are feeling processes"; and he adds in another connection that we must "rid ourselves of the false psychology which regards feeling as running its course within a closed circle beginning and ending with the gratification of its own impulses. Feeling, we are warranted in saying, exhibits, no less than conation, 'an inherent tendency to pass beyond itself and become something different.'"

But while much that in the mollusk and the infant belonged to this feeling mass has with the adult human being developed into clear-cut sense perception and thought, a great part of the most developed human consciousness retains its primitive, rich, undifferentiated character. The logical and orderly mind of the most "cut and dried" logician, who thinks in abstract concepts and reasons in fixed syllogisms of the figure Barbara, has still a great mass of "fringe" and "margin" and "background." The human logic machine is an invention of the imagination; and the most abstract thinker has always more of the "buzzing blooming confusion" in the back of his mind than he would be willing to confess. And fortunate it is for him that it is so, for without it he would lack one of the most fecund sources of ideas with which human nature is blessed. Thought arising from the feeling background is a common experience of every one. Who has not listened to an argument and *felt* its fallacy long before he could put his finger on the weak spot? Who has not searched for a lost name and caught the *tingle* of it, the "*feel*" of it, long before he could grasp its definite ideational or sensational form? And not only is our general *Weltanschauung* determined quite as much by the affective life as by logical arguments, but in their very inception also, many of our most inclusive and most important thoughts and systems of thought come to us in a whirl of feeling most vague and indeterminate at first, and have to be worked out afterwards

into clear formulation. The logical form is often the last product: the idea germinates in the feeling background and grows up out of it. Probably most philosophers — certainly many of them — feel their thoughts as vague tendencies long before they can express them. "The condition behind discovery is a *sense* or *feeling* of harmony or discord among phenomena, and of adjustment or maladjustment between consciousness and its objects." [1]

The entire psychic life is characterized by varying degrees of differentiation. Between the clearly focalized idea and its fringe, between the discriminated sensation and its feeling tone, there is no impassable gulf that may not be spanned by imperceptible gradations. With respect to differentiation Leibnitz's *lex continui* holds of the mind. Especially is this illustrated in the feeling mass. Some of its material has almost forced itself out of the obscurity of the background into the clear consciousness of ideation or sense perception or some compound of these; some has even reached the focal point of attention, as, for instance, intense pain. From this maximum of differentiation the feeling mass slopes down through all degrees of discrimination, obedient to the law of Leibnitz, until it reaches the zero line. There is good reason, moreover, to believe that the Father of German Psychology was right in another of his assertions, and that the feeling background does

[1] Starbuck, "The Feelings and their Place in Religion," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, I, 168.

not stop with the zero line, but passes by a continuous transition into the subliminal region. Certainly, if there be such a thing as the "subconscious," it is a continuation of the field of vital feeling; and though psychologists differ in their interpretation of the subconscious region, the existence of that region not many doubt. Not to mention abnormal phenomena, experimental evidence has been adduced by Jastrow, Dunlop, Stratton, and others which seems to point toward the influence of the subliminal upon judgment. Thus in a long series of experiments Dunlop found that shadow lines thrown at certain angles, but too faint to be consciously discriminated, influenced the judgment of lengths of other lines;[1] and in an experiment of Jastrow's, the subject, who was unable to perceive any difference between two given weights, by merely *guessing* many times which was the larger succeeded in getting results much nearer correct than could be accounted for by chance.[2] In these cases the feeling background, perhaps in part above and in part below the threshold, seems more delicately adjusted to its environment than the cognitive, rational factors.[3]

[1] See Stratton, "Experimental Psychology," p. 89; and Jastrow, "The Subconscious," p. 417.

[2] Jastrow, "The Status of the Subconscious," *American Journal of Psychology*, XIV, 343–353. Several similar subconscious judgments are described in Jastrow's recent work, "The Subconscious," pp. 425–429.

[3] How the subconscious should be construed I cannot pretend to say. Myers's hypothesis of a second personality seems to me

The objective, describable, communicable regions of consciousness, ideation, and sensation may, therefore, be considered as two small islands, bathed in

unsupported by the facts. I can only suggest that from the focus of attention (of the conscious personality, of course) there stretches out an indefinitely extended field of psychic stuff, becoming constantly less differentiated, some of it passing the zero line of one's awareness, and flowing out in what I might call dream waves — or possibly disconnected, split-off pulses of consciousness — beyond. These subliminal dream waves would be made up of the same kind of psychic material as the feeling background, only still less discriminated, or even cut off from the main psychic mass. Both would seem to be intimately connected with the life of the organism, and — if the experiments cited and others like them are worth anything — to be in some respects more responsive to certain slight sensuous — and possibly other — changes in the environment than is the fully conscious and rational personality.

If the subconscious region be conceived thus as not differing in character of content from the conscious background, we should naturally expect its products, like those of the latter, to be good, bad, and indifferent, and thus the pathological, insane, "dissolutive" phenomena would be much better accounted for than on the hypothesis of a subliminal personality. It would seem, moreover, that different individuals differ enormously in the amount of subconscious material connected with the conscious field. And one thing more may, perhaps, be added; namely, that, as Professor James has suggested, this region *seems* to have another environment besides the conscious one; it *seems* to point to a beyond. All that I have said as to the subconscious, is, however, thrown out merely as a suggestion; and even if it be true, it is but a very small part of the truth, — it leaves untouched a great many of the facts. I am aware also that the little I have said is most vague — but perhaps its vagueness is its only merit. So little is known as yet about the subconscious region that I for one have not the temerity to attempt to unify it. Of this, however, we may be sure: "there is actually and literally more life in our total soul than we are at any time aware of" (James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 511).

the sea of vital feeling. This sea in its whole extent —from the subconscious up to the maximum of differentiation — seems to be in a constant state of turmoil. It is forever boiling, so to speak, and throwing up upon the shores of the clearer consciousness all manner of products. Emotions are constantly coming and going, and suggesting an endless number of ideas and actions; sensations normally subliminal or nearly so suddenly become clearly discriminated; ideas "pop into our minds" without any connection with our previous train of thought; the solution of the problem comes without the argument that discovered it; a course of action we find already determined upon, wise but apparently not based on reasoning; intuitions of all sorts shoot out of the dark background; the youth suddenly *discovers* that he is in love and that he has been in love for a considerable time without knowing it; the poet finds the poem half written before he thinks of writing one. This spontaneous character of the vital background often gives its contributions a sense of foreignness, a feeling that they must have come from some source not ourselves — a characteristic pointed out by Professor James in connection with the subconscious portion of this field.[1]

It is largely through this non-rational, vital feeling mass that we are united to our own past, to our ancestors, and to the race, — in fact in a sense to all living things. It is the inheritor of our past and

[1] "Varieties of Religious Experience."

forms what might be called a feeling memory. At every moment our whole outlook is colored by our past impressions and ideas. These are not present as such, — they are not distinctly remembered, — but a general feeling tone and tendency to reaction is established by them and is modified by each event of life; in short the total feeling background is affected by all our thoughts and experiences in such a way that they influence every passing moment. Our total past experience is in a sense summed and massed in the feeling background, which thus becomes a compendium of our history. But it is much more than that; it is largely the storehouse of heredity as well. It is in the line of direct descent and inherits an endless amount of the wisdom gained with so much toil by our entire ancestry. And here let there be no misunderstanding. I am not claiming for the feeling mass any miraculous wisdom of the telepathic sort — any mysterious communication from a Subliminal Self. Whether such it have I know not; that is not the point. What I do claim for it is the possession of what might be called a *racial* or *instinctive* wisdom which seems to put it in touch, in a perfectly natural manner, with forces hidden from the clearly conscious personality and which makes it in many ways wiser than the individual. The organism — our nature as a whole — of which the feeling background is the expression, is essentially right; it is fitted to the universe in which it finds itself. It is to this field of vital feeling that

our instinctive reactions and adaptations, so far as conscious, belong; we do not reason to them, but obey necessarily a longing and an impulse which we simply find. This instinct feeling and impulse is often wiser than our reasonings. It is the accumulation of ages of experience and hence must be reckoned with no less than our little store of personally gathered knowledge and vainly reasoned syllogisms. In our personal sensory experience and our logical conclusions we are very young; in our feeling mass we are older than the race. It is through the promptings of feeling that we respond blindly but surely to the whole of a situation, of which our little conscious selves see only a very small part. Hence the feeling mass may be said to be in touch with a broader environment than the reasoning part of us, and to keep us in touch, not only with the absent in space, but with the distant past and even, in a sense, with the future. For it binds us to the whole of nature and to the laws of the cosmos, and hence may well be called prophetic. Through it, moreover, we are united to the race. It is here that racial antipathies and racial tendencies and in fact the solidarity of the entire human family become manifest. Nor can we stop here, for it is also the one conscious tie that binds us to the whole of sentient life.

This fact, moreover, that it is the affective life which in a sense unites us to the brutes can be no reproach to it in the opinion of any one whose ideal for humanity is anything else than that of an animated

syllogism. For it is feeling alone that gives value to life. Sensation and ideation merely report on the facts. If man were only a cold intellect who saw and judged, one thing would be to him as valuable as another — in fact for him there would be no values in the universe but only truths. It is only because man has feelings, emotions, impulses, that anything in heaven or earth has value. Moreover not only does the feeling background create values; it also is often that part of a man's mental make-up which, for others, *has* value. What we love in our friend is not his sensations, nor chiefly his ideas and his reasoning power; it is principally that combination of indefinable psychic qualities — impulses, desires, likes and dislikes — which we call his disposition. So far, then, is the feeling mass from being something which a man should hope in the course of evolution to get rid of, that, as a fact, if he should get rid of it, no one would be able to find anything lovable in him, and he himself would be utterly unable either to love or even to value anything.

In short, the feeling mass is wider than the other departments of psychic life, deeper than they, and more closely identified with the self. A change in it means a change in personality. Sensations and ideas have a communicable and universal nature; this non-rational residuum is peculiarly private and individual. It is the determinant of character — in one sense it *is* the character and the personality. From it the practical activity gets most of its energy

and most of its guidance. On the other hand, though in one way peculiarly individual in comparison with ideas and sensations, it seems in another sense more universal than they; for it is limitless and *seems* to extend on beyond any borders we can set, and to be sensitive to influences to which the more clearly conscious part of our personality is entirely oblivious.

II

I have dealt thus far only with the conscious portion of our lives. But it must be recognized that many of our most important impulses and desires spring, so far as we can see, from a region of our life which is not conscious at all. Our psychic life is, of course, conditioned or paralleled by neural processes; but it is not to this immediate correlate of consciousness that I refer, but rather to the total physiological condition of the organism — both of the brain and of the rest of the body — which, while not immediately correlated with consciousness, does affect it indirectly and powerfully. Our psychic life is but a portion, and our physical life is but a portion, of the whole man, and each is inextricably bound up with the other.

The line between the fringe region of consciousness and the merely neural and physiological, though clear enough in principle, is not always easy to draw in a given case. Hence it may be that in the preceding pages I have put too much in the fringe region; it may be that a juster analysis would have attributed some of the phenomena which I have placed there to

unconscious neural processes based in turn on the whole organism as dominated by hereditary and instinctive tendencies. Of course I believe my characterization of the fringe region to be the true one. But if I have put on one side of the line some few things which belong rather on the other side, it is of no fundamental importance. For the one thesis which I wish to defend, the one contention for which I really care, is that the whole man must be trusted as against any small portion of his nature, such as reason or perception. These latter should, of course, be trusted, but they should have no monopoly of our confidence. The ideals which have animated and guided the race, the sentiments and passions which do us the most honor, the impulses which raise us above the brutes and which have been the motive forces of history, the intuitions which have marked out the saviors and the saints and the heroes of our earth, have not come from the brightly illuminated center of consciousness, have not been the result of reason and of logic, but have sprung from the deeper instinctive regions of our nature. The man as a whole and the instinctive origin of much that is best in him deserves more consideration than it has sometimes received. For the instinctive part of our nature, in part conscious, in part unconscious, is ultimately the dominating factor in our lives and the source of most of our real ideals. "There is in us," says Maeterlinck, "above the reasoning portion of our reason, a whole region answering to something

different, which is preparing for the surprises of the future, which is awaiting the events of the unknown. This part of our intelligence, . . . in times when, so to speak, we knew nothing of the laws of nature, came before us, went ahead of our imperfect attainments, and made us live, morally, socially, and sentimentally, on a level very much superior to that of those attainments." [1]

This is not "poetry" nor "mysticism," but very sober truth. In very deed the richness of our lives cannot be accounted for without appeal to this marginal and instinctive region of our nature. There is, of course, nothing original in this assertion — in a sense it is even trite. And yet its full significance seems hardly to have been grasped by much of our contemporary psychology. The aim of the preceding pages has been to emphasize the importance of this basal region. They may contain errors of fact and of inference. But mistakes in working out the detail of the subject will not prejudice the reader against the one contention for which I wish my book to stand — the insistence, namely, upon the immense and vital importance of our instinctive life as manifested in the feeling background and as seen particularly in the religious consciousness. Before turning to the question of religious belief, however, it will be necessary to consider the nature of belief in general. This, therefore, will be the subject of our next chapter.

[1] "Of our Anxious Morality," *Atlantic Monthly*, January, 1906.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF BELIEF

It seemed important at the very beginning of our discussion to consider the nature and the place of what I have called the feeling background and its relation to the cognitive factors of our psychical make-up. If to the reader my treatment of this has seemed unnecessarily detailed, I can only refer him to the sequel for my justification. At any rate, this preliminary work accomplished, we are now at liberty to come to closer quarters with our theme, and in the present chapter shall consider the general nature of belief, submitting it to the same sort of analysis which, in the last chapter, we applied to psychic life as a whole.

I

At the very beginning of this our second section of psychological analysis, however, it may be well to utter a word of warning lest the reader misinterpret the results of both these psychological chapters. It is the misfortune of all exposition which depends upon analysis that it must almost inevitably distort the truth. Reality in its native form resists dissec-

tion and refuses to be sorted and labelled and docketed in any cunningly devised system of pigeonholes. "Nor are the things that are in one universe divided or cut off from one another with a hatchet."[1] Life, the real world of our immediate experience, is a very different thing from any account of it; and a description which should be perfectly true in the sense of distorting and exaggerating nothing and leaving out nothing, would simply give us life back again, with no clearer insight into its elements and their relative importance than we had before. This, for example, is what Shakespeare does for us, who is of all poets the closest to reality just because he is the least analytic.

Any investigation which, like the present one, seeks to analyze a portion of reality into its essential parts, in order to make its more important aspects capable of being grasped by the intellect, must, at the start, lay aside all pretensions to presenting the world as it really is in immediate experience. It must plead guilty to the spirit's indictment in Faust, "Thou hast destroyed the beautiful world." But it does so only that it may thereby attempt to obey the behest of the same spirit, "In thine own bosom build it again, mightier and more beautiful." For our interests, as intelligent beings, are by no means confined to the immediate and primary experience, but dwell rather in a region made anew by our theoretical powers, a world of distinctions, defi-

[1] Anaxagoras, fragment 13.

nitions, and laws. The intellect demands that the immediate reality of naïve experience shall be analyzed, ordered, made over; and the resulting conceptual world, though at one remove from primal reality, has the advantages of clearness of outline, ease of comprehension and of exposition, and practical applicability, which to the intellectual side of our nature more than compensate for the loss and distortion incurred.

The preceding chapter and the present one participate in the loss, and I hope also in the gain, here intended. Life as we know it directly and immediately is not *divided* into the three or four components with which our first chapter dealt. It is merely so *divisible*. Ideation and sensory experience and the feeling background are never found isolated from each other, but together they form a unity which is our conscious life. There is no pulse of consciousness which does not contain all three. It is only for the purposes of analytic thought, following after reality, that the three elements there dealt with can be spoken of separately. The utmost that analysis can say of the immediate reality is that certain pulses of consciousness are dominated more by one of the "elements" than by the others, and so may be characterized or named by it. And the same general qualifications must be made with respect to the present chapter. The three different kinds of belief with which we shall deal are not clearly and neatly separated off from each other in real life in the manner

in which analysis and exposition must picture them. Thus no genuine belief is altogether devoid of feeling, and nearly every belief of adult life is in some degree intellectual. Yet if we are to do more than *live* our beliefs, if we are to reflect upon them at all and to come to conclusions about them, we must have recourse to analysis and make distinctions. The question whether the analytic method is justifiable is really the question whether thought is worth while; whether we should continue to build up a scientific knowledge of the universe or should "turn and live with the animals."

II

So much for the limitations and the justification of analysis. To come now directly to the subject of this chapter, belief [1] may be briefly defined as the mental attitude of assent to the reality of a given object. This assent may be either articulate or inarticulate, — it may be the mere immediate feeling of reality not as yet questioned, or it may be the more self-conscious acceptance of the object as real after doubt has made the possibility of its non-reality conceivable.[2] Belief is, therefore, as Hume pointed out

[1] How indebted I am in this chapter to Professor James's treatment of belief will be obvious to every one familiar with the "Principles of Psychology."

[2] Professor Baldwin was the first to distinguish sharply between these two kinds of belief ("Feeling and Will," p. 149 f.). The distinction is clearly important and he considers the difference

long ago, something more than the mere presence of an idea in the mind; whether or not the object of consciousness shall be an object of belief will depend upon the "manner of our conceiving" [1] it. The object of belief is not merely presented or represented, but acknowledged and accepted as a part of the world of reality — in whatever sense that word may at the time be intended. Take Santa Claus for instance. The child who still retains his orthodox belief has no more intense and vivid image of him than he will have two years hence when he has ceased to believe in him. But the image is now coupled or tinged with a feeling of consent and acceptance which is *sui generis* [2] and which at once ranks Saint Nick alongside of papa and mama and all good angels in the world of beings which most surely are and on which one may with confidence rely.

so great as to forbid of the two being included under one term; hence he reserves the name "belief" for the articulate and self-conscious kind of certainty, giving to the inarticulate variety the name "reality-feeling." Baldwin's analysis is excellent and his distinction is well taken; yet it seems to me that after all the two states have so much in common and are so nearly related that it is desirable to have a common term for both, and for this purpose I know of none better than belief. For reality-feeling is only inarticulate belief; as Bain says, "we believe without knowing it." Hence I have tried to formulate my definition in such a way as to include both the mental states of Baldwin's discussion.

[1] "Treatise of Human Nature," p. 96 (Selby-Bigge's edition).

[2] Cf. Brentano's distinction between an idea as *vorgestellt* and the same idea as *anerkannt*. The difference he considers so great that he erects *Vorstellung* and *Urtheil* (of which belief is only a form) into two of the three great divisions of psychic life.

If now we apply our distorting but necessary process of analysis to belief, we shall find that it falls naturally into three distinct types, which for convenience I shall call primitive credulity,[1] intellectual belief, and emotional belief. Just what I mean by these terms I shall now try to show in some detail.

(1) When the first faint pulse of consciousness awakens within the infant, whatever presents itself to his mind is of course "real." Here in a very true sense *esse est percipi*. There is as yet no possible distinction between the real and the unreal, hence every object of consciousness is accepted as a matter of course and bears with it the same sort of reality feeling which in more sophisticated years is restricted to a portion only of one's mental objects.[2] Let us suppose, for instance, with Professor James, that the infant's first visual impression is a lighted candle; "what possible sense (for the child's mind) would a suspicion have that the candle was not real? . . . The candle is its all, its absolute. Its entire faculty of attention is absorbed by it. It *is*, it is *that*, it is there; . . . no alternative, in short, suggests itself as even conceivable; so how can the mind help believing the candle real? The supposition that it might possibly do so is, under the supposed condi-

[1] Bain's term.

[2] "La crédulité est un état primitif qui accompagne toutes nos représentations, fait aisé a constater chez les enfants et les ignorants; . . . il s'attache naturellement à toute image ou idée qui occoupe la conscience sans antagoniste." — RIBOT, "La Logique des Sentiments," p. 187.

tions, unintelligible." [1] So irresistible, in fact, is the feeling of reality in such a case that Professor Baldwin distinguishes it sharply from the more sophisticated beliefs under the name "reality-feeling." "Reality-feeling, at this early stage, is, in fact, simply the fact of feeling; nothing more, but this much. Existence is simply presence; but presence is existence, and whatever is, in consciousness, is real." [2]

Another instance of this original identification of the presented with the real is the child's belief from authority. He accepts whatever he is told, just as the new-born infant accepts every mental object as real. The possibility of doubt has not as yet entered his head, hence every assertion that he hears comes tinged with the feeling of reality. We shall find this amply illustrated when we come to study the religion of childhood in Chapter VII.

But primitive credulity is by no means limited to childhood. And it is not merely the child who tends to believe whatever he is told; we all do. Every object of consciousness that comes to us from an external source — whether it be the perception of an external thing or a thought given us by some fellow-creature — tends to carry with it the same feeling of reality which the child has on viewing the candle. To the naïve, unsophisticated mind (and which of us

[1] "Principles of Psychology," Vol. II, pp. 287 and 288. Cf. also Bain's treatment of belief as beginning in "Primitive Credulity."

[2] "Feeling and Will," p. 150.

is not naïve and unsophisticated a large part of the time?) whatever is seen or heard is believed. It is believed until a cause for doubt arises, and doubt is always a secondary matter. The burden of proof is with the negative; and, like the prisoner at the bar, the newly presented object of consciousness is accounted innocent of deception until proved guilty. The doubting spirit is distinctly a secondary and comparatively artificial growth — whence the necessity of its inculcation, as seen in the prevalence of such maxims as that one should believe nothing that one hears and only half of what one sees, etc. The more primitive and unspoiled nature of the mind is exemplified by the proverbial countryman or "marine" to whom one may "go tell" whatever he likes without fear of disbelief. It is only after many hard knocks, many clear cases of deception and disappointment, that the natural credulity with which every one of us starts out is modified by a modicum of scepticism; and in even the most incredulous it is never completely overcome.

The relation of primitive credulity to authority is obvious; the two terms are in a sense correlative. The authority may be that of another human being or of a material thing which we perceive through the senses and recognize as real. This latter case, in fact, is the most clearly marked instance of primitive credulity retained in adult years. From the cradle to the grave sense perception is a power that puts doubt out of the question and forces from us assent

to the reality of the perceived object. I cannot doubt that the book which I see before me is really there. The mere presentation is so vivid as to carry assent with it. "To see is to believe." So obvious is this that Hume made the feeling that comes with sensuous presentation the criterion of all belief.[1] As he also pointed out, one of the most successful ways of putting new life into weak and uncertain intellectual creeds is to bring them into close connection with some lively sensuous perception.

Primitive credulity in the matter of sense perception is therefore psychologically of the same nature as our naïve acceptance of what is told us by some one else. In the case of each, presentation and acceptance are one and the same. Both are in a sense authoritative. Belief from authority, however, has two distinct meanings which must be sharply distinguished. It may mean the acceptance of the presented because it is presented, as here; or it may refer to a special kind of argument in which some one's authority is consciously used as a definite reason for belief. This latter use of authority belongs, not to primitive credulity, but to what I have called intellectual belief. The distinction is important and must be grasped and kept constantly in mind throughout our discussion of religious belief, for the two uses of authority are psychologically quite different. To reason to a belief from some one's authority as a basis is not

[1] He defines belief as "a lively idea related to or associated with a present impression." "Treatise," p. 96.

essentially different from other forms of reasoning, and involves a more or less complicated and deliberate intellectual process which is at the antipodes from the immediate and naïve acceptance of the given. This latter is a much more original and primitive action of the mind and shows much better the natural, primal, unspoiled character of belief. For belief thus understood is as natural to man as breathing; it is his normal attitude. Doubt is quite a secondary growth and arises only at unusual emergencies. "As a rule we believe as much as we can," says Professor James. "We would believe everything if we only could." [1]

(2) It is only after doubt has come that intellectual belief arises. To entertain reasons for believing in the existence of a thing presupposes the possibility of its non-existence. Hence belief in things absent, and still more in things by their nature intangible and invisible, has no such strong hold upon our nature as belief in the reality of our perceptions. The mental image and especially the concept do not carry their passports with them as do the objects of primitive credulity. Hence in their case we are constrained to have recourse to extraneous sources of reality-feeling. We seek for reasons — connecting links of various sorts — to give to these more abstract intellectual objects the tingle of reality which they do not of themselves possess when simply fallen out of the blue. We not merely assent to them — we

[1] *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 299.

know that we assent and we often know why we assent. The connecting links above mentioned are other and stronger beliefs which for the moment are assented to as certainly true. Thus I believe that the book which I saw a few moments ago in the next room is still there, spite of some one's assertion that it has melted away. I have here a mental image instead of a percept before my mind, — an image of the book standing on the shelf in the next room — and to this image I assent, I recognize it as a part of my world. This I do not because of the mere strength of an overmastering mental object, but because, though the representation is comparatively weak, I connect it with other facts which have a sure place in my "real" world, and I argue that if the book has melted away as suggested something incredible has happened to my reality. These connecting beliefs, or basal beliefs, from which we argue, are of various sorts. Sometimes they are sensuous presentations, sometimes they are themselves reasoned beliefs resting on something else. Perhaps the majority of them may be included under the term "authority," using the word in the second or more rationalistic sense defined above. No one man is able to investigate more than an infinitesimal portion of his universe, hence we all necessarily and rightly accept most of our facts — especially our scientific and historical facts — from experts. This we do, however, not in the way of the young child who believes whatever he is told, nor of the naïvely credulous who

believe because they "saw it in a book," but because we have reasons — better or worse — for relying upon the expert's knowledge and trustworthiness.

The reliability of any reasoned belief will depend, of course, on the nature of the individual reasoner. The strength of intellectual conviction will also vary considerably with different individuals and with different beliefs. For while the abstract concept or the reasoned assertion is by itself comparatively poor in reality-feeling, it may be so interconnected and entwined with our total "real" world that a refusal to consent to it would work havoc among all our accepted realities, turn all our habits of thought upside down, and leave us seemingly not a foot of solid ground on which to stand. A conceptual belief thus intrenched will often be harder to dislodge even than one backed up by an immediate sensory experience.

(3) Our third type includes all those beliefs, of many sorts indeed, which draw their strength from the field of vital feeling. They vary all the way from superficial cases prompted by momentary and chance desire to the deep promptings of vital needs. Their strength and their motive power and impellent force are simply enormous; and this is true, not only of the more deep-lying kind, but of the more superficial as well. It is a matter of common remark among psychologists, logicians, historians, and others, how often the judgment is beclouded by the prejudice of feeling, and how repeatedly "the wish is father to the

thought." The case of Caliph Omar is typical. "He burnt the Alexandrian library," says Bagehot,[1] "saying, 'All books which contain what is not in the Koran are dangerous; all those which contain what is in the Koran are useless.' Probably no one ever had an intenser belief in anything than Omar had in this. Yet it is impossible to imagine it preceded by an argument. His belief in Mahomet, in the Koran, and in the sufficiency of the Koran, came to him in spontaneous rushes of emotion; there may have been little vestiges of argument floating here and there; but they did not justify the strength of the emotion, still less did they create it, and they hardly even excused it." Emotion often so increases the vividness of an idea and adds to it so much reality-feeling as to give it almost the overpowering force of an immediate sense presentation. It is to faith what life and wings are to the bird; and many a belief which if left to its logical supports would fall to the ground is able by the mere strength of its own imperious feeling to defy the gravitating power of argument and doubt.

The case in which passion hinders clear judgment and results in a hastily formed and false conclusion is not the only type of belief arising from the forces of the feeling background. More deep-lying is the instinctive conviction of the existence of a satisfaction for the various organic desires. To the child who

[1] "On the Emotion of Conviction," in "Literary Studies," p. 412.

has known the pleasure of food and of warmth, but now lacks them, the idea of his mother's breast and of his mother's arms has a deep coloring of reality-feeling. They are very real to him, he believes in them, because he needs them. They are necessary to him, therefore they must exist. This is the primitive form and the ultimate organic origin of the "will to believe." It is seen in all instinctive tendencies; hunger, thirst, the sexual impulse, the need to breathe, the desire for activity, the craving for society and fellowship and human sympathy, all are bound up with the inherent belief in their own possible satisfaction. Nor is this use of the term "belief" in any way an extension of its strict meaning. It is literally "the mental attitude of assent to the reality of a given object." The object in these cases is the thing which will satisfy the need or impulse, and the idea of this thing must, of course, be derived from some prior experience or from the instruction of others before belief in it can be said to arise. But this idea once given, it derives from the instinctive demand which it alone can satisfy a feeling of reality which almost equals that of a direct presentation. The desired object indeed is not present, but the organism insists that it shall exist somewhere, and that it shall become present somehow. It *must* be real, therefore it *is* real. The organism demands that its needs shall be prophetic of reality.

The feeling background is, as I have indicated, the spokesman and the mouthpiece of the organism

and its instincts. It has long been a recognized fact that the instinctive and unreasoned reactions of the organism are often more certain, more swift, more appropriate, than actions which are the result of conscious choice. The same kind of appropriateness, the same kind of adaptability to a present situation, in short the same kind of wisdom, belongs to the instinctive beliefs, if so we may call them, in which the feeling background voices the demands of the organism. Such a belief is hardly to be eradicated by argument. Its roots go deeper down into the organic and biological part of us than do those of most things whose flowers blossom in the daylight of consciousness.

III

So much for belief in general. Now, the three phases or kinds of belief which we have been discussing are particularly marked in the history of man's faith in the divine. Religious belief may be mere primitive credulity which accepts as truly divine whatever is presented to it as such; it may be based on reasoning of various sorts; or it may be due to a need of the organism, or to an emotional experience or "intuition" — an unreasoned idea springing from the background and bearing with it an irresistible force of emotional conviction. As these three types of religious belief are to form the central part of our entire discussion, I shall refer to them respectively as the "Religion of Primitive Credulity," the

"Religion of Thought" or "of the Understanding," and the "Religion of Feeling."

This prefaced, the purpose and plan of the following chapters is simple. The common aim of them all will be to trace the development and to determine the relative value of the three forms of religious belief. The four chapters which immediately follow will deal with these phases of belief and their development as shown by the facts of religious history in four typical positive religions; while the remaining chapters will concern themselves with the religious belief of the modern individual.

PART II

HISTORICAL

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AMONG PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

THE religions which I have chosen as typical for the study of belief are the primitive Animism of uncultured races, the religions of India and Israel, and certain phases in the history of Christianity. It must be remembered that I am not attempting to write a history of these religions, but simply to trace, in broad lines, the development and the influence of the three kinds of belief already pointed out. Such a treatment will almost necessarily suffer from two quite different faults. It will, in the first place, be incomplete and fragmentary, and deal with types and tendencies rather than with the whole truth; and, on the other hand, it will seem at times to fall a prey to the opposite evil, and in order to be at all concrete and definite will run the risk of confusing the reader in details, and seeming to lose sight of the main issues. So far as possible I shall steer clear of both these dangers, but to do so with perfect success will be most difficult; and I therefore warn the reader to prepare for both Scylla and Charybdis.

I

What I have called the Religion of Primitive Credulity will need little discussion in any of the positive

religions with which we shall have to deal. Its general psychological nature having been already described, not much remains to be said. It is seen in every religion, but most clearly of all in the simple faith of childlike races. Having as yet comparatively little power of thought and slight experience of the kind that prompts doubt, primitive men, like other children, are extremely credulous, and tend to accept, as a matter of course, whatever is presented to them. To doubt the traditions of the tribe that have been handed down through the generations and taught them by their parents does not occur to them. Their belief is thus one of authority in the first sense of the word.[1] For they do not as yet argue that their parents must have known more than they and that, therefore, it is wise to accept their words as true. On the contrary, they have not yet reached the stage of argument on these subjects, and the teaching of the ancestors is accepted simply because presented. The process is identical with that of the beliefs of our own childhood. Thus myths about spirits and gods, once started, are handed down from father to son, and are believed implicitly because it has never occurred to them that doubt is possible.

It is not merely in oral tradition that primitive credulity is to be seen. The object of naïve belief may be presented through the eye as well as through the ear. The simplest case of this is the dream in which the savage sees his dead father or some great

[1] *I.e.* as described on p. 37.

and powerful departed chieftain. Such an immediate visual experience naturally passes at its face value; and to doubt the reality of what he sees — whether waking or sleeping — probably never enters the head of the unsophisticated savage. All anthropologists agree that primitive man makes comparatively little distinction between the dream state and the waking perception, so far as their relative reality is concerned. He has not as yet refined upon the conception of the real world, and to him all things that he experiences are equally real, — it is the case of the child and the candle over again.

Less obvious but equally typical cases of the Religion of Primitive Credulity are seen in the nature gods of early races. In them auditory and visual presentation are combined. The sun is accepted as a god because so presented by tradition; but the strength of the belief — the strength of the reality-feeling — is greatly increased by the fact that the divine object is directly presented to the sight. It is a psychological truth that "seeing is believing." And what is true of the sun is equally true of all the numerous nature gods of the savage. So long as primitive credulity is the chief basis of his religious belief, the gods are likely to be capable of direct presentation to the senses. There is a strength and comfort in being able to see and touch one's god, just as one may see and touch one's fellow-man, which makes primitive credulity possible or at least comparatively easy and simple. Hence the appearance

at an early stage of animal gods and vegetable gods, of mountain gods and river gods, and hence also, at a later stage, the value of fetichism. Fetichism is probably far from being a truly primitive phenomenon and makes its appearance only after thought has begun to mingle with primitive credulity, and to distinguish clearly between the god or spirit and his material body. Methods are then invented by which the god may be induced to take up his abode in some object that can be carried about with one, and thus by an artificial means one is able to rejuvenate one's faith through the unfailing strength of sensuous presentation. The importance and value of this is seen in a good piece of psychological writing to be found in Nassau's "Fetichism": "The heathen armed with his fetich feels strong. He believes in it; has faith that it will help him. He can see it and feel it. He goes on his errand inspired with confidence of success. . . . The Christian convert is weak in his faith. He would like something tangible. He is not sure that he will succeed in his errand. He goes at it somewhat half-hearted and probably fails. . . . The weak ask the missionary whether they may not be allowed to carry a fetich only for show." [1]

[1] pp. 112, 113. A friend of mine living in Guatemala informs me that the Catholic missionaries who converted the natives to Christianity have allowed them to retain their fetiches with the simple substitution of the name of some saint for that of the original god or spirit.

II

Primitive credulity remains one of the great bases of religious belief throughout the entire course of animistic faith, but it is only in the early and most naïve stages of animism that it is practically unaided by other forms of belief. What I have called the Religion of Thought begins very early in the history of every race, and as the human intellect develops it tends slowly but surely to rival or even supplant the Religion of Primitive Credulity. As this change takes place in the basis of man's belief, a corresponding transformation is brought about in the nature of his gods. Growing constantly farther and farther away from his primitive life of private and independent feeling, laying always less stress on the subjective and more on the objective and social, man becomes gradually "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," and as he comes to think less in terms of immediately given sensation and becomes more imaginative and more thoughtful, his gods retreat from the stone and the tree and the beast, and become the distant spirits who merely make use of these objects as their manifestations. Had there been a clear consciousness of the change that was going on, we may be sure the more advanced thinkers would have looked back with contempt on the *crude* notions of their benighted ancestors and doubtless would have prided themselves on their advanced thought and on the intellectual powers of their

enlightened age; while the timorous many would have cast a fond and envious glance backward to the good old times when the eye of faith still saw in sun and stone, in river and tree, very god of very god. To such a timorous but pious soul the signs of the times would have seemed very bad, and the future would have promised only darkness and doubt. No more might he see with bodily eye the God of Day as he rose in his chariot of gold above the distant hills; no more might he feel upon his cheek the tender breath of Zephyrus or Boreas's strong blasts. The howling of the Storm, the roar of the Thunder, the bellowing of the Sea, were no longer the voices of the gods. The kindly Tree which had fed his ancestors and his own childhood was only a tree after all. No more when alone or in danger might he press against his beating heart the image in which dwelt his own divine companion. And when night came, with its shadows and its mysteries, he might not any longer look upward with devout eyes and behold the heavens beaming upon him with hosts of friendly deities. No, all these old gods of his fathers, so modern thought had taught him, were but the results of the activities of distant spirits, whom he might not see nor hear nor grasp. Well might he have cried in despair to the leaders of thought of his day, "I asked for bread and you have given me a stone; I wanted a god whom I could see and hear, whom I could know directly, you have given me a god whom I can only know about. I need a god whom

I can grasp and feel; you have given me one whom I can only reason to. You have taken away my Lord, and I know not where you have laid him."

Such a picture as this is not purely imaginary. Something quite like it happened in Athens in the fifth century, when the populace exiled Anaxagoras because he taught that the heavenly bodies were not gods, but stones; and the condemnation and death of Socrates was in part due to the fact that he was accused of the same "atheistic" teaching.[1] With most peoples, to be sure, the dying out of the old sense gods was much more gradual and was perhaps hardly noticed, and the picture I have drawn is, therefore, largely an exaggeration. But I wished to emphasize the fact that the change from pure primitive credulity to the conscious use of reason in matters religious, and the corresponding change in the nature of the gods, though unnoticed and exceedingly slow, was really momentous. The first recognition that reason has rights within the realm of religion is the entering in of the wedge and announces the birth of systematic theology on the one hand and the beginning of the warfare of Science and Religion on the other. It was the first critical turning point in the history of religious belief. No longer could man, with his increasing intelligence, believe as his fathers had believed; if faith was still to live upon the earth, it

[1] Cf. also what is said of Indra and of the Queen of Heaven in Chaps. IV and V.

must seek a new basis. And had the religious consciousness of that day been as keenly awake to the signs of the times as is the religious consciousness of the present, it might have found as great reason as has the latter for looking out upon the future with uneasiness and fear.

Far from reducing the number of gods, however, the first result of the application of the understanding to things religious was greatly to increase their number. The belief in spirits entirely disembodied and flitting about, independent of all corporeal things, seems to have been due largely to the imagination. Having peopled the visible world with a host of spirits, the mind could not easily stop, but of its own momentum, as it were, went on to the creation of countless other beings in such quantities that even nature was poor in comparison and unable to furnish each with a body. Thus among the Malays "invisible spirits fill up the gaps which intervene in the substances of visible things."[1] The association of ideas which bound the notion of spirit activity to nearly every event of importance must also have contributed to the formation and support of this belief. If a person is taken ill, it is due, of course, to some evil spirit, visible or invisible; and so many things are always happening which simply cannot be accounted for except by the great hypothesis of spirit action — that key which unlocks every mystery — that one cannot help reaching the belief in a host of disem-

[1] Ratzel, "History of Mankind."

bodied spirits, surrounding us on every hand, by night and day.

The significance attributed by uncivilized peoples — and even by many highly civilized peoples — to words and names, may have had something to do with the origin of many spirits. It seems to require a high degree of mental development before one is able to conceive that a name is really only a name. Thus even in the subtle Vedanta philosophy of the cultured Hindus, "name and form" are important parts of a man's soul; and the Romans kept the name of their local deity so profoundly secret, in order to prevent an enemy from getting control of the god by means of it, that no one to this day has any notion what it was.[1] This early conception of the real existence of names, I suggest, may have had much to do in the formation of a certain class of invisible deities. To this class would belong, perhaps, many of the deified forces of nature, personified qualities — which Tiele assures us are very ancient deities — and such gods as "Breathless Fear" among the Malays and Love and Strife among the Greeks. The importance in Hellas of the divinities Nemesis, Wealth, Fortune, and other personified abstractions, is well known. That the process of creating new gods of this sort continued far down into historical times is shown by an incident in the life of Themistocles, the tone of which also indicates that the people were just beginning to take the pro-

[1] Cf. also the Egyptian myth of Ra and Isis.

cedure *cum grano salis.* Themistocles had demanded supplies from the people of Andros and had backed up his demand by adding that the Athenians came with two great gods, Persuasion and Compulsion. The people of Andros replied that they were less fortunate than the Athenians in their deities, for they had but two worthless ones, namely, Poverty and Inability; wherefore they could not give.[1] But the best example of this sort of thing is, of course, to be found in the departmental deities of Egypt and early Rome, which apparently arose from the same general causes.[2]

The origin of the belief in tribal gods — as found especially among the Semites — is not so simple a matter. Jevons considers them all the anthropomorphic survivals of the original totem; Andrew Lang regards at least one of them (Yahweh) as having originated as a "high god," or "Supreme Being"; while Herbert Spencer, of course, would have us believe that all tribal gods — and for that matter all gods — were developed from an original ancestor worship.[3] None of the writers mentioned have been able to marshal sufficient evidence to make their hypotheses anything more than good guesses; and

[1] Cf. Campbell, "Religion in Greek Literature," p. 146.

[2] Cf. especially the *di indigetes* of the Romans and those of the *di novensides* that were made by splitting off epithets of the old gods. See Wissowa, "Religion der Römer," pp. 15–20 and 48–50.

[3] Grant Allen considers Yahweh as originally a god of fertility — see his "Evolution of the Idea of God," pp. 192–196.

it may be that we shall never know how the gods in question arose. But the belief in them once having been born, it is evident how it was kept alive. One did not believe in his god because he could see or touch him — except very rarely in dreams and visions — but one believed in him none the less; and this for several reasons. In the first place, the fathers, who were so much wiser than we, and from whom we have learned nearly all that we know, taught us about him. That surely is enough for any reasonable tribesman. Then, too, look at the facts of life; is he not our king? Does he not lead us in war and give us victory over our foes? — except, indeed, at times when he is angry with us for some offence known or unknown; and, for that matter, is not his anger still surer evidence of him? The nomad's reasons for believing in his god are on a par with his general intellectual development; but they are still reasons, and they form one of the chief bases for his belief.

As a further development of the Religion of Thought I shall merely refer to Andrew Lang's "high gods of low races." These are great gods, usually creators, who preside over the whole earth and seem to have originated as an answer to the question, Who made all things? They play no very conspicuous part in the development of religion, it must be admitted, but they do furnish evidence of the powers of generalization and inference which, in greater or less degree, have been at work in the formation of all savage faiths. According to Pres-

cott,[1] a native Mexican historian, who bore the euphonious name Ixtlilxochitl, affirms that a famous Mexican king (whose name is too euphonious to mention here) worshipped an unknown god under the name "Cause of Causes." And Andrew Lang[2] tells us of a Greenlander who in conversation with a missionary made use of the design argument. Just how much these particular stories owe to missionary influence may well be a question; but that savages of even lower races than the Greenlanders and Mexicans do employ some such course of reasoning can hardly be doubted.

The Religion of the Understanding has only its rude beginnings in the early history of the race; its complete flower is to be found in the more highly developed religions and in modern thought. Having considered very roughly its general position in primitive times, I shall, therefore, leave it for the present and devote the rest of this chapter to the influence of the feeling background on early religious belief.

III

In dealing with the Religion of Feeling as found among uncivilized peoples, it will be necessary to confine ourselves largely to the less agreeable, less trustworthy, less normal aspects of the feeling back-

[1] "Conquest of Mexico," Vol. I, p. 194.
[2] "The Making of Religion," p. 199.

ground. There is, of course, a saner side to the savage's religious feelings, as is seen in his unreasoned demand for some sort of higher power, and in his insistence in all but the lowest stages of culture that this higher power shall not be indifferent to human morality. Yet, while this is true, there is very little of concrete data available on this aspect of the question which lends itself to psychological treatment. And, in fact, it will surprise nobody that the most striking and typical characteristics of the feeling mass in early peoples should be fantastic and bizarre. Just as the theological reason at this stage is characterized largely by its fallacies, so we must expect to find the products of the feeling background often verging on the abnormal or the positively insane. This, of course, must not be allowed to discredit the Religion of Feeling in all stages of its development. The mad ravings of the "shaman" are, indeed, far from possessing beauty or trustworthiness; yet they will hardly prejudice the reader against the fairer products of this same field, unless he is also willing to conclude that because human reason is untrustworthy in the Australian it is equally so in Aristotle.

But, however this may be, our question, for the present at least, is the purely psychological one as to the importance of the feeling mass on early religious belief.

Men at a low stage of culture are much more dominated by the feeling background than are their civilized brothers or descendants. As society develops

and as communication becomes more important, man lays greater emphasis on the common and communicable, and attributes to it constantly greater "reality" as compared with his purely private and incommunicable experiences. Nevertheless there are few human beings so "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought" as to have lost all sense of the power of the background; and with men at an early stage of civilization the feeling mass often breaks through all restraints and asserts itself in temporary but complete and unchecked mastery.

An example of this is seen in the religious dances of nearly all savage tribes. These may be imitative of the deified animal, as in the seal dance of some of our Indians. Or it may be less wild, though hardly less emotional, as the Arapaho Sun Dance, in which the participants dance solemnly to the honor of their god at frequent intervals for three days — especially at sunrise and sunset — during which entire time they abstain from food, the ceremony being accompanied by song and drum, and ending mid great fervor and excitement.[1]

Similar dances are found among nearly all the tribes of both Americas. To the semi-civilized Peruvians the dance was so important in all religious celebrations that the name for a great religious feast really meant dance.[2] Races of all degrees of civiliza-

[1] Geo. A. Dorsey, "The Arapaho Sun Dance," Field Columbia Museum, Anthropological Series, No. 4.

[2] J. G. Müller, "Geschichte der Amerikanischen Urreligion."

tion, in short, from the Australians up to the Greeks, have found in the dance the best way of arousing and of expressing their religious emotion. In fact one of the best examples of this social religious phenomenon that we possess is the Thracian cult of Dionysos, which was adopted by the Greeks in spite of the sober and unemotional nature of their religion and in spite of the emphasis which Greek thought laid upon the great distance between gods and men. I quote from Rohde's description: "The rite was performed on hilltops, in the darkness of night, by the uncertain light of torches. Music resounded, the crashing of brazen cymbals, the rolling thunder of a great drum, and the deep note of the flute 'enticing to madness,' whose soul was first awakened by the Phrygian Auletes. Excited by this wild music the band of worshipers danced with shrill cries. . . . In a whirling, raving, rushing circle the inspired throng danced over the hillside. . . . So they raged till their emotions were aroused to the utmost pitch, and in sacred madness they precipitated themselves upon the beast chosen for offering. . . . The participants in this sacred dance were thrown into a sort of madness, a tremendous overtension of the whole being; a kind of rapture seized them in which they seemed to themselves and to others 'mad, possessed.' . . . . This powerful intensification of feeling had a religious meaning, in that only through such overtension and expansion of his being did man feel able to come into touch and communion

with beings of a higher order, with the god and his throng of spirits. . . . This 'ekstasis' was considered a sacred madness, in which the soul having fled from the body became united with the god, in a condition of 'enthusiasm.' Those seized with this were called ἔνθεοι; they lived in the god, were in the god. While still in the finite ego they felt and enjoyed the fullness of an infinite life." [1]

The effect of all this on belief is obvious. Emotion always carries its credentials with it, and — except by unusually intellectual and introspective persons — is regularly taken at its face value. One does not reason from it to belief; it *is* a condition *of* belief. The dance results in a sense of freedom and liberation from the conventional limitations of custom and thought. Ordinary social restraints are thrown aside, the affective background of the individual, roused to greater and greater excitement by the contagious excitement of the crowd, gains full control, and the feeling of personality, no longer hemmed in by the objective life, swells past all limits and seems to take on an over-individual character. The immense amount of feeling thus aroused centers around and crystallizes about the idea of the god in whose honor the dance is performed, until as a result the god is felt by the participants to be actually within them.

But beside the public dances and similar ceremo-

[1] Rohde, "Psyche," Vol. II, pp. 18–20. See also Miss Harrison's "Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion," Chap. VIII.

nies in which the people at large partake and from which they all as a body receive some share of the divine afflatus, there are related phenomena experienced only by particular individuals, without the assistance of the excitement and contagion of a crowd. These favored few feel, at times, the vast emotional background of their minds boiling up with strange turmoil, and flinging out into clear consciousness certain products which they cannot recognize as of their own making, while their limbs and muscles seem animated by a power not their own.

In its milder form such an experience results in the doctrine of "familiar spirits." "There are times," says Tylor, "when powers and impressions out of the course of the mind's normal action, and words that seem spoken to him by a voice from without, messages of mysterious knowledge, of counsel or warning, seem to indicate the intervention of, as it were, a second superior soul, a familiar demon." [1]

A more violent form of the experience referred to is interpreted as the actual possession of the man, mind and body, by a spirit, not whispering to him from without, but dwelling within him, for the time, and controlling all his thoughts and actions. It is not every one who is thus favored by the spirit world, a peculiar disposition is required; and those who have the prerequisite nervous make-up are reverenced as persons especially close to the spirits, and hence from these the priests are often taken. Thus among

[1] "Primitive Culture," Vol. I, p. 182.

the natives of Chili the "priests" or "jugglers" are "generally chosen while children to be initiated in the mysteries of this profession, from among those who are most effeminate, and such as happen to be subject to epilepsy or St. Vitus dance are considered as especially marked out for the service of the jugglers."[1] Among the Indians of Guiana, if the *peaiman*, or priest-magician, has no son to succeed him, he chooses a boy with an epileptic tendency and trains him up in such a way as to accentuate his native pathological condition.[2] The same epileptic symptoms are the tokens by which are chosen the *shamans* of the Mongols and Lapps, the *jongleurs* of India, the *gangas* in Africa — in short the interpreters of the gods the world over.

Given this naturally nervous temperament, a special preparation calculated to accentuate the abnormal excitability is often necessary before the would-be "medicine-man" or "shaman" is able at will to bring about the phenomena of possession. Thus in Guiana to become a *peaiman*, the candidate has to undergo a painful and severe trial of endurance. "He has to undergo long fasts, to wander alone in the forests, houseless and unarmed, and with only such food as he can gather; and he has to accustom himself to drink fearfully large draughts of tobacco juice mixed with water. . . . Maddened by the draughts of nicotine, by the terrors of his long, solitary wander-

[1] Kerr, "Voyages," Vol. V, p. 405.

[2] Im Thurn, "Among the Indians of Guiana," p. 335.

ings and fearfully excited by his own ravings, he is able to work himself at will into those frantic passions of excitement during which he is supposed to hold converse with the *kenaimas* (evil spirits) and to control them." [1]

To bring about the phenomena of possession usually requires not only a long training, but particular preparation in each case. Thus among the Caribbeans the *piaje* or magician needs several hours of preparation before he can bring himself into the desired condition. This he does by blowing tobacco smoke into the air, murmuring strange words which cannot be understood, stamping on the ground, etc. Fasting and the use of narcotics are especially common means in all parts of the world for weakening the body and exciting the mind to the proper pitch.

The most typical example of this sort of possession is the *shamanism* of Siberia. One of the best accounts of this is that contained in Radloff's "Aus Siberien," given to him by trustworthy native informants who themselves believed that the shaman was actually possessed by the spirits of the ancestors — for in Siberia it is not the gods, but the ancestral spirits, who control the shaman. "The individual destined by the might of the ancestors to be a shaman feels suddenly a drowsiness and languor in his limbs, which shows itself through a violent trembling.

[1] Im Thurn, *op. cit.*, p. 334. For an account of a similar preliminary course of training, see Crantz's "History of Greenland."

A violent, unnatural yawning falls upon him, a heavy weight lies upon his breast, violent inarticulate cries force themselves from him, a shivering fit shakes him, he rolls his eyes violently, springs up suddenly and spins around in a circle until he falls down, covered with sweat, and rolls on the floor in epileptic convulsions and spasms. His limbs are entirely without feeling, he seizes whatever comes under his hands and swallows without purpose whatever he has grasped. . . . All his sufferings become stronger until at last he seizes the shaman drum and begins to shamanize [*schamanisiren*]," — that is, to give answers, predict the future, etc., in the name of the ancestral spirits.[1]

Williams and Calvert report similar phenomena in Fiji. The priest who is consulted as to the future anoints himself with oil. "In a few minutes he trembles; slight distortions are seen in his face and twitching movements in his limbs. These increase to a violent muscular action, which spreads until the whole frame is strongly convulsed and the man shivers as with a strong ague fit. The priest is now possessed by his god and all his words and actions are considered as no longer his own, but those of the deity who has entered into him. Shrill cries of 'It is I,' 'It is I,' fill the air, and the god is thus

[1] For a similar account, see a letter from Herr von Matjuschkin, given in Horst's "Zauber-Bibliothek," and still better, V. M. Mickhailovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia," *Jour. Anth. Inst.*, XXIV, 62–100, and 126–158, particularly 65–79.

supposed to notify his approach. While giving the answer the priest's eyes stand out and roll, as in a frenzy; his voice is unnatural, his face pale, his lips livid, his breathing depressed, his entire appearance like that of a furious madman. The sweat runs from every pore and tears start from his eyes; after which the symptoms gradually disappear." [1]

Instances like these could be cited from almost every land; but they all bear so unmistakable a family resemblance that the two cases quoted will serve as types for all.[2]

That many of the contortions of these medicine men are mere pretense, and that perhaps most of their utterances while in the state of possession are spoken with the purpose of mystifying and deceiving the bystanders, is probably the case; yet no one can doubt that much of the phenomena of possession is perfectly genuine, and that the shamans themselves feel actually controlled by a foreign power, and believe even more devoutly and fervently in the presence and power of the spirits than do the most credulous of the onlookers. Thus good David Crantz in his "History of Greenland" tells us that some even of those "*angekoks*" (shamans) "that have renounced

[1] "Fiji," Vol. I, p. 224.

[2] For other cases see Tylor, "Primitive Culture"; Jevons, "Introduction"; Tennant's "Ceylon"; Lombroso, "L'Uomo di Genio"; Horst, "Deuteroskopie" and his "Zauber-Bibliothek"; Erman, "Reise um die Erde"; Schoolcraft, "Indian Tribes"; Krause, "Die Tlinkitindianer"; Leems, "Nachricht über die Lappen"; Mickhailovskii, "Shamanism in Siberia," etc.

both their heathenish infidelity and these impostures with it, maintain that they have fallen into such a state as if they had been beside themselves, and then certain images have arisen before them which they then took to be revelations, but afterward they seemed to them like a dream. . . . Nor is it to be denied that the father of lies may have had a hand in their legerdemain, to procure credit for these whom he may use as his servants, and to befool the poor people. Therefore the baptized Greenlanders, even those that have been *angekoks* themselves, persist in it that the greatest part is indeed delusion, but that some interposition of spirits is also mixed with it, something which they now abhor, but cannot describe." [1]

The phenomenon of possession and its accompanying belief retains its original character throughout all the stages of savage life and continues even into civilization. Several Shinto and Buddhist sects among the cultured Japanese regularly practice a kind of hypnotism which results in what they consider possession by one of their gods.[2] Nowhere is the phenomenon found in greater prevalence than in modern China, and some of the best descriptions we have of it are given in Dr. Nevius's book on "Demon Posses-

[1] For similar statements by numerous Siberian shamans, see Mickhailovskii, pp. 138 and 139.

[2] See the very interesting book "Occult Japan," by Percival Lowell. He who would be possessed goes through a long course of physical and mental training tending to make the mind as blank as possible. The actual process of "possession" is a clear case of hypnotism. See especially pp. 4–7, 134, 135.

sion." The Chinese variety differs from that of Siberia and Fiji in not being confined to a professional class nor requiring any preparation or training, and also in being generally looked upon as a disgrace rather than as an honor, it being evil spirits and not the gods who control the subject. One of the cases given by Dr. Nevius is so instructive — the description being in the words of the sufferer himself, — that I shall give a brief account of it here. One night, says Mr. Kwo, the narrator, "a spirit came, apparently in a dream, and said to me, 'I am Wang Muniang. I have taken up my abode in your house.' It said this repeatedly. I had awakened and was conscious of the presence of the spirit. I knew it was a *shie-kwei* [evil spirit] and as such I resisted it, and cursed it, saying, 'I will have nothing to do with you.'" About a week afterward, Mr. Kwo goes on to say, a feeling of uneasiness and restlessness came over him which he could not control and he felt impelled to go to a gambler's den, where he lost considerable money. He went there twice again and on his return home the third time fell down frothing at the mouth and was carried to his house. "I soon became violent, attacking all who ventured near me. . . . For five or six days I raved wildly, and my friends were in great distress. They proposed giving me more medicine, but the demon speaking through me replied, 'Any amount of medicine will be of no use.' My mother then asked, 'If medicine is of no use, what shall we do?' The demon replied,

'Burn incense to me and submit yourself to me, and all will be well.' My parents promised to do this and knelt down and worshiped the demon, begging it to torment me no longer. Thus the matter was arranged, I all the time remaining in a state of unconsciousness." When Mr. Kwo came to, he refused to worship the demon and again lost consciousness. At length his parents prevailed upon him to consent, and they erected a shrine to the demon, before which they made prostrations and burned incense. "The spirit came at intervals, sometimes every few days, and sometimes after a period of a month or more. At these times I felt a fluttering of the heart, and a sense of fear and inability to control myself, and was obliged to sit or lie down. I would tell my wife when these symptoms came on, and she would run for a neighboring woman less timid than herself; and they two burned incense to the demon in my stead, and received its directions, which they afterward communicated to me, for though spoken by the lips I had been entirely unconscious of them." During one of the absences of the demon Mr. Kwo was converted to Christianity, owing to the promise of the missionary that if converted he would be no more troubled, and he at once tore down the demon's shrine. "A few days afterward the demon returned, and, speaking through me, of course, a conversation ensued between it and my wife, which was as follows: 'We understood that you were not to return. How is it that you have come back again?' The demon

replied, 'I have returned but for one visit. If your husband is determined to be a Christian, this is no place for me.' 'What do you know of Jesus Christ?' they asked. The answer was, 'Jesus Christ is the great Lord over all; and now I am going away and you will not see me again.' This," says Mr. Kwo, "was actually the last visit; and we have not been troubled since." [1] The case of Mr. Kwo is typical of a score of cases reported in Dr. Nevius's book.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this discussion, possession is a matter of the vast background of feeling, involving sometimes only a mild sense of spiritual presence, at others bringing into play the subconscious field — as in the case of Mr. Kwo. In every case it is an emotional experience, crystallized about and usually roused by the idea of a spirit. The sense of strangeness or *otherness* which so often accompanies the activity of this basal field of consciousness, being inevitably connected with the idea of the spirit or demon which forms the nucleus of the experience, it necessarily follows that the whole should be regarded as an experience of the presence of the spirit in question. Hence the individual's belief in the particular spirit receives an increment of strength which neither reasoning nor sensation nor both combined could bring; for the emotional experience goes to the very depths of the man's being.

The feeling side of the experience is doubtless

[1] J. L. Nevius, "Demon Possession and Allied Themes," Chap. II. The same phenomenon is found in Southern India. See Monier-Williams, "Brahmanism and Hinduism," p. 252.

much the same among all races; but the interpretation differs with the latitude and longitude — in fact with individuals living side by side. In Siberia it is the good spirits of the ancestors who possess the shaman; in China it is the evil spirits who possess the people. As we go higher in the scale of religions we find possession is no longer due to spirits, but to the gods, as in Japan, or to the god, as in early Israel. The content of the belief depends always on the ruling ideas of the community, and hence in no two countries or ages is it exactly the same. But the *form* of the belief is everywhere identical; on the essential of possession all peoples of every race or time agree — namely that it *is* possession. Whether it be the friendly ancestor spirits that possess one, as the shamans think, or whether it be the father of lies as David Crantz and his Greenland converts think, or whether it be demons and evil spirits as Dr. Nevius and the Chinese think, they all agree in maintaining that "some interposition of spirits is mixed up with it." And whatever those may think who have never had the experience, he who has once been "possessed" is convinced, with a faith that cannot be shaken, that he has been in immediate contact with the spirit world. This is the only kind of faith that succesfully defies and outlives a real conversion to a new religion. The Christian neophyte may become fully convinced that his idol or his sacred tree, which he saw, or his great nature god to which he reasoned, was no god at all;

but if he has ever been "possessed" by one of the spirits of his old religion he can never cease to believe in it. He may now call it a devil instead of a god, as Crantz's Greenlanders did; but before the missionary can convert him from believing that these spirits, under whatever name, exist, the missionary himself will be converted, as witness Crantz and Dr. Nevius. The "Religion of Feeling," to be sure, requires the idea of a spirit or a god to crystallize about, and this must be furnished it by the senses or the understanding; but once formed, it furnishes religious belief a support so strong that it seems well-nigh impregnable.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN INDIA

ALTHOUGH the aim of this book is to discover the form and basis of religious belief rather than its content, it will be necessary to pay considerable attention to the latter if we are to understand the former; it being impossible to discuss intelligently the question *why* man believes without taking into consideration *what* he believes. This will be particularly manifest in our treatment of the religions of India and Israel. In each of these religions we shall have to take up in some detail the content of the belief in order to understand its form and the psychological forces at work in its development.

I

Little need be said of the Religion of Primitive Credulity in India. In all races this form of belief is essentially the same. As every one knows, the authority of ancestral tradition has always been one of the dominant forces in the popular religions of the Hindus. What I have said in another connection concerning the nature of this phase of belief is applicable here, so that all I need do is to point out the

nature of the gods that were correlative to this type of faith and to trace the gradual decline of the Religion of Primitive Credulity before the advance of the Religion of Thought. This decline is betokened in a general way by the change in the nature of the gods; for although primitive credulity, of course, still plays an important part in belief even when the gods have ceased to be visible and concrete and have become distant, unseen, and abstract, the change is a sign of a great increase in the relative importance of thought and of a corresponding decrease in the power and importance of the more naïve type of faith.

When we open the earlier pages of the Rig Veda, we find ourselves in an animistic world of polytheism and polydemonism in which both the Religion of Primitive Credulity and the Religion of the Understanding are easily to be traced. The great forces of nature are thoroughly personified and have definite characters. Belief in many of the gods is still based largely or chiefly on the fact that one has so been taught and that in addition one sees them and hence cannot disbelieve. There is Dyaus, the Sky, and Ushas, the Dawn, and Surya, the Sun; if one be inclined to doubt of their existence all he has to do is to open his eyes any fine morning, and, behold, there they are.

"Ushas approaches in her splendor, driving all evil darkness far away, the goddess."

Surya "uprises on the slope of heaven, that marvel that attracts the sight."

Vata, the wind god of the earliest Vedic times, is the physical — though of course also sentient — wind which one feels and hears. Agni, the god of fire, was, most likely, at first any and every fire — each separate fire being an Agni; and even in the Veda, Agni is still the physical flame. "Driven by the wind he hastens through the forest with roaring tongues . . . black is thy path, O bright Immortal." "He mows down as no herd can do the green fields; bright his tooth and golden his beard." [1]

Soma was at first the very plant whose juice gave such delight, and the beginning of his worship must be considered as belonging with any other tree or plant cult. Even the great Varuna was in all probability at first a sky god.

The Religion of the Understanding was, however, well advanced by the beginning of Vedic times, and there were already several gods who were manifested rather than seen in the phenomena of nature. As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the two forms of belief went along side by side for many centuries; and this is particularly well illustrated in the case of the sun god and the wind god of the Indians. For while retaining Surya as the very sun whom they saw, they came to believe also in another sun-god, Savitar, who was not the visible sun, but rather the Enlivener, whose activity was seen in the constant motion and the life-giving power of the great

[1] R. V., I, 58, 4; V, 7, 7. The translation is by Professor Hopkins. See his "Religions of India," p. 107.

luminary. So also with the wind. In addition to Vata, the physical wind, we find, as much more important, Vayu, the god *of* the wind, "the higher side of the wind as a power lying back of phenomena." [1]

But not only did the Religion of the Understanding grow up along side of the Religion of Primitive Credulity; it very early began to supplant it. The thought of the Indian, growing more abstract, could not be satisfied with the merely traditional or the immediately given, and the unifying tendency of the reason began to seek for the one power back of the many phenomena. The first result of this demand for unity was the destruction of many of the sense gods. Even before Vedic times, Soma had ceased to be the individual plant, and had become the one god of the many plants. In like manner Agni had become the one god of the many fires, and still later he is the god of the threefold fire, of that, namely, on earth, in the lightning, and in the sun. In similar fashion the relation of Varuna and Mitra to natural phenomena had been almost forgotten, and this loosing from nature it was which gave an opportunity for the great moral development of these gods, while in turn their lofty characters tended still more to separate them in the minds of their worshipers from any particular nature objects.

But the god in whom the Religion of the Understanding first came to anything like full blossom is

[1] Hopkins, "Religions of India," p. 87.

Indra, the storm god, who always remains intangible and invisible. One cannot accept him on the direct evidence of one's senses, but must reason to him. This lack of sense evidence for the god resulted in two things. In the first place, Indra became the most thoroughly anthropomorphic of the gods, and the one about whom the most myths were told. And in the second place, Indra was the only god in connection with whom the question of *faith* arose. One Vedic singer tells us that when Indra hurls his bolt men "have faith" in him; in another hymn we read that the sun and moon and rivers run their course that we may "have faith in Indra," etc.[1] Now so much emphasis laid upon faith is a certain indication of the presence of doubt. One does not talk about faith when it is complete and universal any more than the ordinary man thinks about digestion when in good health. The importance, therefore, attributed to "faith in Indra," is full of significance. Nor are we left to this inevitable inference alone, for two of the hymns tell us plainly that some men doubt the existence of Indra: —

"Of whom, the terrible, they ask, Where is he? or verily they say of him, He is not."

"Some say, indeed, Indra is not.

"Who ever saw him? Who is he, that we may praise him?" [2]

The wording here is significant; for the argument

[1] R. V., I, 55, 5; 102, 2. Griffith's translation.
[2] R. V., II, 12, 5; VIII, 8, 3.

seems to be that Indra is not *anywhere* in particular — *i.e.* at no point of space does he come in contact with the senses — and especially that no one has ever *seen* him. When we remember, therefore, that Indra and the comparatively unimportant Rudra were the only gods unconnected with visible or tangible objects, and when we add to this the fact that only in the case of Indra do we find expressions of disbelief, may we not feel justified in seeing here an illustration of the doubt which, in a previous chapter, I suggested might have arisen when the basis of belief shifted from tradition and the senses to the understanding? The people whose belief in their gods had been everywhere else strengthened by the immediate evidence of perception found it hard, at times, to feel the same certainty about a god whom they could neither see nor feel, but whom they must reason to or accept entirely on faith. The transition to the Religion of Thought was inevitable, if belief was to continue, but it was necessarily accompanied at first by more or less uncertainty and doubt.

II

One knowing the nature of the human mind could have told at the very beginning of religious development that the goal which the Religion of Thought would ultimately set before itself and strive to attain would be some form of monism. The aim of the reason is to explain, and the essence of explanation is

in saying *This* is a case of *that* — *i.e.* in classifying the particular under the general. The general class, moreover, under which many particulars are subsumed, demands explanation as much as they, and can in its turn be explained only by subsumption under some more general class. Hence the final ideal and demand of thought is the reduction of all things to a single ultimate explanation. To stop short of that in any form of polytheism is for thought to be baffled and to admit at least some measure of defeat.

But though the demand of reason is unity, its problem is to construe the given universe, and the existence of the demand by no means implies its own satisfaction. To fall short of complete unity is, indeed, for reason to be baffled; but it may very well turn out that there is in this universe an irrational element, which, if taken cognizance of, will necessarily baffle reason.

Different minds give different degrees of relative importance to the unitary impulse of reason, on the one side, and to the multiplicity and apparent lack of homogeneity on the other. Which side of the question one shall espouse is often more a matter of constitution and temperament than of argument and proof; in general, rationalistic and empirical philosophers are born, not made. And as it is with separate thinkers, so it is with races; there are rationalistic and empirical peoples as well as individuals.

Both races and individuals, however, differ only in the relative strength of the opposing tendencies, not in the nature of those tendencies themselves. The demand of the reason is given varying degrees of relative importance, but in itself it is always the same, and always and everywhere seeks as large a degree of unity as is compatible with the facts of which it takes account. Hence the growth of the Religion of Thought is almost identical with the development of the tendency toward monism.

The thought of India clearly shows this monistic tendency from the earliest times. Though at first it was unconscious of its real aim and final goal, *we* can seen that it was always on the way thither.

The Rig Veda is, of course, polytheistic, but in its polytheism, even in the older books, is a latent tendency toward the formation of a pantheon with one supreme god. The thing which at first stood in the way of such a development was the number of candidates for the supreme office. In the earlier hymns looms up the majestic figure of King Varuna, who is described in terms more befitting a supreme god than ever Homer used of Zeus; and that with some devout worshippers he retained his early importance and greatness to comparatively late times is seen from the following verses of the Atharva Veda:—

"If two persons sit together and scheme, King Varuna is there as a third and knows it.

"He that should flee beyond heaven far away, he would not flee from King Varuna.

"King Varuna sees through all that is between heaven and earth and all that is beyond. He has counted the winkings of men's eyes." [1]

But Varuna was too lofty and too unbribable to be popular; and Indra the fighter and soma-drinker, the ideal of the warrior class, outstripped him, only to yield in his turn, in popularity, to the priestly gods, Agni and Soma.

Yet the leaders of religious thought became more and more dissatisfied with the plurality of divine powers. As the reason had sought for the one Agni back of the many fires, and the one Soma back of the many soma plants, so now it was urged on by an irresistible impulse to seek for the one God back of the many gods. This longing for a supreme, if not unitary, power to whom one might appeal is seen even in the earliest hymns, where to the deity addressed are attributed such power and splendor as only a supreme god might naturally be expected to possess; and this peculiarity of the hymns, though perhaps hardly deserving of a special name, such as "henotheism," is still significant of the fact that none of the gods were clearly outlined, and that the Indian mind laid more stress on the general divine nature of the deity and less on his particular personality.

As a result of this dimness of outline in the conception of the gods, many of them tended to run together. Thus many were classed in pairs, making

[1] A. V., IV, 16, 2, 4, 5.

a new divinity, whose name was the compound of the two. Max Müller specifies twelve such dual deities,[1] the oldest of whom, Mitra-Varuna, goes back to pre-Vedic times. The gods are also, at times, identified with each other: Surya is Indra and Agni; Agni is Varuna and Mitra, Indra, Aryaman, and Savitar. All the gods together are called the Visve Devas, the All-gods, and are worshiped as such, collectively.

Whither all this was pointing must have been apparent to every thoughtful reader of the times. The gods were dissolving into each other and losing gradually what distinctness of personality they had possessed. The first step toward monism had been taken.

In some passages of the Rik, pantheism is more distinctly hinted at. A late hymn of the First Book says: —

"They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni — to that which is but one they give many a title." [2]

The hymn to Varuna in the Artharva Veda, from which I quoted a few pages back, has the following remarkable verse: —

"Both this earth belongs to King Varuna, and also yonder broad sky whose boundaries are far away. Moreover, these two oceans are the loins of Varuna; yea, he is hidden in this small drop of water." [3]

[1] "Origin and Growth of Religion," p. 280, note.
[2] R. V., I, 164, 46.
[3] A. V., IV, 16, 3.

It was thus, we may suppose, being whispered about among the more philosophically minded that all the gods were at bottom one; that even Varuna and Indra and Agni and Soma were but manifestations of a fundamental unity which alone was real. It was a time of religious crisis; the old foundations were giving way, and nothing very solid was as yet prepared to take their place. With the more advanced thinkers the serene and simple faith of the olden times was no longer possible, and for them it was a day of doubt and of deep pondering. Some of the later hymns of the Rig Veda clearly show these tendencies.

"Ye will not find Him who produced these creatures: another thing hath risen up among you.
Enwrapt in misty cloud, with lips that stammer, hymn-chanters wander and are discontented." [1]

"Who verily knows it and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation?
The gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being?
He, the first origin of this creation, whether He formed it all or did not form it,
Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, He verily knows it, — or perhaps He knows not." [2]

Some of the thinkers of this age may very well have seen in the signs of the times the speedy or at least certain decline and extinction of religion. Pantheism and a belief in a perfectly impersonal cosmos

[1] R. V., X, 82, 7. [2] R. V., X, 129, 6 and 7.

they would have accepted as the truth and the logical and necessary outcome of Indian thought. The gods were dead, and soon the people must come to a recognition of this fact and to the acceptance of a pantheism that to all practical purposes was equivalent to atheism; and some of the philosophers, we may suppose, were quite ready to write books on the Non-Religion of the Future.

If such philosophers there were, they were destined to disappointment. The people stuck to their polytheistic religion, and those whom we may call the religious leaders, though following out the monistic speculation, clothed it in spiritual terms and clung to their faith. Faith, in fact, — so ardently did men in these dark days of doubt hold to it and long for it, — became itself a sort of deity.

"Man winneth Faith by yearnings of the heart, and opulence by Faith,
Faith in the early morning, Faith at noonday, will we invoke,
Faith at the setting of the sun. O Faith, endow us with belief!"[1]

Unable to hold to their old polytheistic ideas and to their old gods, but clinging to their faith in something divine, they searched for the one God in many directions. In a late hymn, which Max Müller entitles "To the Unknown God," the singer describes at length what the one God would be if he could but find Him; but each verse ends with the uncertain

[1] R. V., X, 151, 4 and 5.

query, "What God shall we adore with our oblation?"

"Giver of vital breath, of power and vigor, He whose commandments all the gods acknowledge;
The Lord of death whose shade is life immortal. What God shall we adore with our oblation?
His, through His might, are these snow-covered mountains, and men call sea and Rasa His possessions:
His arms are these, His are these heavenly regions. What God shall we adore with our oblation?
By Him the heaven is strong, the earth is steadfast, by Him light's realm and sky vault are supported:
By Him the regions in mid-air were measured. What God shall we adore with our oblation?
He is the God of gods, and none beside Him. What God shall we adore with our oblation?
Lord of Life![1] Thou only comprehendest all these created things, and none beside Thee."[2]

All through the period of the later hymns and the earlier Brahmanas the search went on. Prajapati, Visvakarman, Brahmaspati, Purusha, — new gods from the priestly mould, in part monotheistic, in part pantheistic, — all were tried, but none gave complete satisfaction. Rest is not found until in the Upanishads all gods and men and all things are merged in the Absolute — Brahman.

The point of view most characteristic and most fundamental in the Upanishads is absolute idealism.

[1] "Prajapati." — Whether meant as a personal name, or used as a descriptive title of the unknown God, is not altogether clear.

[2] R. V., X, 121; 2, 4, 5, 8, 10.

The reason's fundamental demand for unity had gained its own fulfillment. Brahman, the Absolute, is the All-knower, and is identical with the knowing self of each individual. And the central thought of the Upanishads is that Brahman alone is real: all that exists is Brahman. With unwearying enumeration He — or shall I say It? — is identified with all things. "Thou art woman, thou art man; thou art youth, thou art maiden; thou art an old man tottering along on thy staff; thou art born with thy face turned everywhere. . . . Thou art the thunder-cloud, the seasons, the seas. Thou art without beginning, because thou art infinite; thou from all worlds art born." [1] He is "smaller than the small and greater than the great." "Though sitting still He walks afar; though lying down He goes everywhere. . . . The wise, who knows the Self as bodiless within the bodies, as unchanging among changing things, as great and omnipresent, does not grieve." [2] "He rests and yet is restless; distant, and yet so near! Within all things is He present, and yet beyond all He extends." [3]

As the subject of knowledge He is himself entirely Unknowable — exactly as Kant's transcendental ego. In a sense we may attribute to Him existence, thought, and joy, but only negatively, as denying of Him empirical existence, objective existence, and the

[1] Svetasvatara, IV, 3 and 4. (Müller's translation). Katha, I, 2, 20, 21, 22.

[3] Ica, 4–5.

distinction of subject and object.[1] In Him subject and object are one and He is best known in dreamless sleep. We can describe Him only with the words "Netti, Netti," "No, No." "He is incomprehensible, for He cannot be comprehended; He is imperishable, for He cannot perish." [2] He is that which is "without sound, without touch, without form, without decay, without taste, without smell, without beginning, without end, beyond the Great, and unchangeable." [3] "By whom it is thought, by him it is not thought; he by whom it is thought knows it not. It is not known by those who know it, known by those who know it not." [4]

"Whoever has found and understood the Self that has entered into this patched-together hiding place, he indeed is the creator, for he is the maker of everything, his is the world, for he is the world itself.

"While we are here we may know this; if not I am ignorant and there is great destruction.

"If a man clearly beholds this Self as God, and as the lord of all that is and will be, then he is no more afraid.

"He in whom the five beings and the ether rest, him alone I believe to be the Self, — I who know,

[1] See Deussen, "Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie," Vol. II, pp. 117–134; and his "System des Vedanta," pp. 139–155.

[2] Brihad., IV, 4, 22.

[3] Katha, I, 3, 15.

[4] Ke. Up., II, 3. Cf. St. Augustine, "Deus melius scitur nesciendo."

believe him to be Brahman; I who am immortal, believe him to be immortal.

"They who know the life of life, the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, they have comprehended the ancient primeval Brahman.

"By the mind alone is it to be perceived, there is no diversity. He who perceives therein any diversity goes from death to death. . . .

"He therefore that knows it, after having become quiet, subdued, satisfied, patient, collected, sees Self in self, sees all as Self. Evil does not overcome him, he overcomes all evil. . . .

"This great unborn Self, undecaying, undying, immortal, fearless, is indeed Brahman. Fearless is Brahman, and he who knows this becomes verily the fearless Brahman." [1]

The question naturally arises why the Indian religion took the direction of absolute monism rather than of monotheism. The answer, I believe, is hardly to be found in climatic or geographic conditions, nor in the environment generally, but must be sought in the mental characteristics of the leaders of religious thought. As we have seen, the natural impulse of the reason is to construe all things in terms of an absolute unity, unless prevented by facts of which it is compelled to take cognizance. Now the religious leaders of India were characterized just by their indifference to, and almost scorn of, all

[1] Brihad., IV, 4, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 25.

facts that resisted the aims of pure thought. They were rationalists *par excellence*. If nature seemed inconsistent with the demands of the reason, so much the worse for nature: it was but illusion, Maya's veil, and gave no clew to ultimate reality. The true, behind the apparent, could be nothing but the all-inclusive Unity which reason demanded.

Beside the apparently pluralistic character of nature, another fact but little regarded by the Indian mind was the existence of antitheses in the moral world. Metaphysics has always been of much more importance in India than ethics; the universe is thought under the category of being rather than in terms of obligation. This is well illustrated in the characters of the Vedic gods. With the exception of Varuna and Mitra there is not one who is distinguished for righteousness; and it was the fate of Varuna and Mitra to yield early to the easy-going and passionate Indra, whose goodness consisted chiefly in giving rain and cattle to those who supplied him with butter and soma, and who throughout the Veda prizes the burnt offering far higher than the contrite heart. If we leave out of consideration Buddhism and some of the minor sects, we may say that for India the great line of cleavage in the universe has always run between the real and the unreal, rather than between the right and the wrong; and it is just this lack of interest in the moral question, this indisposition to divide the world into two great warring camps of the good and the evil, as did the Persians,

that has led the Indian to the conception of an absolutely monistic God, who should include within Himself the evil as well as the good, the just no more than the unjust, who should in fact be indifferent to both, and "*jenseits von gut und böse.*"

This monistic conception, uninfluenced by empirical or moral considerations, was, then, the natural result of giving free reign to the demand of the reason; and had the Upanishads been philosophical treatises only, this conception — which is certainly the ruling one — would have been the only one as well. But the Upanishads are not chiefly systems of philosophy, and the concept of Brahman, while scarcely influenced by empirical and moral data, was due, not entirely to logical thought, but in large part also to the religious feelings and demands. Thought and feeling I have had to separate for purposes of exposition, but such separation, it must be remembered, is artificial and untrue. In many of the Upanishads the yearning of the religious soul had almost as much to do in forming the concept of Brahman as had the logical intellect. It was the *religious* thought that wrote most of the Upanishads.

This religious thought was not systematic, and Brahman is therefore viewed in different ways. At times the universe is described pantheistically, Brahman and the world being identified; at times all beside Brahman as the knowing subject is regarded as pure illusion — appearance, not reality. In still other passages neither the pantheistic nor the abso-

lute idealistic view satisfies the religious demands of the writer, and Brahman becomes the personal God, the Creator and Sustainer and Soul of the World. This new direction seems to have been largely, though perhaps unconsciously, determined by feeling. In the writers of the later Upanishads the mystic experience seems to have been more dominant than in the earlier ones; it is in them that we find expressed the most intense mystic bliss;[1] and it is in them also that the transition from the more abstract to the more personal concept of Brahman is most often met with. It seems probable that the experience was in large degree responsible for the belief, though doubtless the belief also had much influence on the experience. The theistic outcome of the later Upanishads seems largely a product of the Religion of Feeling.

Most characteristic of India is it that throughout all this period of monistic speculation, polytheism kept the even tenor of her way just as if nothing had happened. Says Barth, in his "Religions of India," "The coexistence of things which to us seem to contradict and exclude each other is exactly the history of India, and that radical formula which occurs even in the hymns, that the gods are only a single being under different names, is one of those which is often-

[1] The bliss of the earlier Upanishads is often not conscious bliss, but deep, absolutely unconscious sleep. See Deussen's "Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie," Vol. II, pp. 131 and 132; also his "System des Vedanta," pp. 197–202.

est on her lips, and which yet, up to the present time, she has never succeeded in rightly believing." To the philosophers polytheism still had a certain grade — though a low grade — of truth, while to the common people it was just as true as ever. And if we abstract from the philosophers, the majority of whom from the times of the Upanishads down to our own have professed the absolute idealism of the Vedanta, we may say that the religion of the people as a whole has always been polytheism, with more or less of a recognition in the back of their minds that the gods somehow or other were really One, and that if one ever became a philosopher one would see it that way.

Nor were they without reasons for their polytheistic belief. Had not their fathers and their wise ancestors believed in many gods? Did not almost every one so believe? And had not they themselves so believed all their lives? Among all peoples — and the Indians are no exceptions — authority and habit have always been two most important foundations of faith. Moreover, if they regarded nature and the experiences of life, they saw multiplicity and a world of apparently many powers. It was only among the philosophers that reason's demand for unity was strong enough to overcome all these things. To the simple mind which asks only a few questions and seeks explanation only a little way, polytheism is the obvious answer to most cosmic problems. Nor are we to suppose that this clinging to the old gods

was uninfluenced by the feelings and the will. The religious soul longs for sympathy and often demands a god who shall be so personal as to be very finite. Hence the importance in Hinduism of Krishna and Rama and the other divine avatars. In religious concepts thought and feeling are so inextricably interwoven that it is impossible to trace the influence of the one without becoming involved in the other.

Before leaving the Religion of the Understanding in India, I must treat very briefly of Buddhism, for it is a specially good example of the product of pure thought in religion. To trace its origin we must go back again to the Upanishads. Some of these writings, as I pointed out above, were largely influenced by feeling, and as a result tended to make the absolute Brahman into a monotheistic God. But there is another tendency in the Upanishads, traces of which are found especially in the less emotional and more coldly intellectual portions. This tendency is away from absolute idealism toward materialistic pantheism. Brahman is all — that is to say, All is Brahman, or all is one. There is no Brahman outside of the world, of course, and the name Brahman, no longer supported by any emotional experience, is retained to mean the world only as a relic of the past. Materialistic pantheism in its strict sense naturally and logically leads to atheism — it is already atheism put in polite terms. If the materialistic pantheist be not a mystic, he is bound by his own

logic to deny anything like what is ordinarily meant by a God. To deny the God of idealism and still to affirm that God is everything, is exactly equivalent to affirming that He is nothing. The only difference between materialistic pantheism and atheism is an emotional tinge which the former sometimes possesses, and which in it is essentially incongruous and out of place.

The logical outcome of the less emotional pantheistic Upanishads was, therefore, the atheistic Samkhya philosophy. And from the Samkhya (through its off-shoot, the Yoga) sprang Buddhism.

The Samkhya was essentially philosophy, not religion. It taught, to be sure, a way of escape from those evils which it recognized; but this escape was a matter of knowledge — a sort of science. Its purely intellectual character was not a thing for people to live by and hence brought no satisfaction to the masses. Was it possible to make the atheistic Samkhya into a religion? This was Buddha's problem. Like Kapilla, the author of the Samkhya, he sought no help from any god; man must work out his own salvation. And this was to be done not only by a realization of the truth of things, but also by the practice of real virtue and through enthusiasm for an ideal of life to which one might attain on earth. This, with the inspiration which came from the magnetic personality of the Master, gave to Buddhism that emotional quality which has stamped it a religion rather than a philosophy, and which has been

responsible for its great success. Its logic was consistent enough; but its atheistic character proved to be no more satisfactory to the human heart than was the philosophy of Kapilla; and if this be an essential of Buddhism, we may say that there have been but very few Buddhists in all history. Not many have felt themselves strong enough for such a doctrine. The yearning for supernatural help and supernatural companionship has been one of the most striking and universal characteristics of the race; and the deification of the atheistic Buddha himself in every land where Buddhism has been preached is a striking commentary on human nature and on the futility of an atheistic religion.

The unsatisfactory character of atheistic Buddhism and of pantheistic Brahmanism when untouched by emotion, and their inability to become real religions, illustrates the insufficiency of the reason as the sole basis for religious belief. Both strict Buddhism and absolute and unemotional idealism are much more logical and make much stronger appeal to pure thought than many a popular faith; yet one thing they lack. And as the Religion of Primitive Credulity had to give way before the Religion of the Understanding, so we now see the latter unable to satisfy the demands of human nature and turning for assistance to the Religion of Feeling.

III

In the Shamanism and possession of early races we saw one of the earliest stages of the belief that man may come into immediate contact with superhuman spirits. Among almost every savage people there are individuals who, by certain processes, can work themselves into an ecstatic condition which to them primarily, and secondarily to the beholders, means possession by the god. That this phenomenon was not unknown to the early Indians has been shown to be most probable by Oldenberg in his "Religion des Veda." Not only does it seem likely from *a priori* considerations, but certain ceremonies have been pointed out by Oldenberg which seem exactly on a par with methods used by other early peoples to bring about the ecstatic state. Thus in the Diksha ceremony of preparation for the Soma offering, one must be bathed and suitably clad and with head swathed must sit near the offering fire in perfect silence till sunset; at that time one must drink of the sacred milk and then watch through the night, observing certain other requirements, such as speaking with a stammering tongue, keeping the last three fingers closed in one's fist, etc. Sometimes this preparatory ceremony lasts till complete bodily exhaustion. How closely this resembles the sweat baths, fasting, and self-inflicted pains of many sorts, used the world over by savage tribes to bring about esctasy and possession, will be evident to all. "Fasting and exhaustion,"

says Oldenberg, "are among the chief characteristics of the Diksha; the element of ecstatic rapture has left at least one trace, if I am not mistaken — namely, in the stammering speech of those officiating." [1]

This Diksha is also called a "Tapas" — the word used to mean ascetic practices, and the ecstatic condition aroused thereby. This notion of the acquiring of supernatural power and illumination through self-inflicted pains meets us throughout the Yajur and Atharva Vedas and in the Brahmanas. The Yajur Veda recognizes certain forms of possession by good and evil spirits, and while the poets of the Rik are, as a rule, interested only in the more sober side of the cult, there is at least one hymn which shows us the wild form of possession in which the "Munis" (*i.e.* ascetics in a state of ecstasy), are described as acting much as the shamans of Siberia.

"The Munis, girdled with the wind, wear garments soiled of yellow hue.
They following the wind's swift course go where the gods have gone before.
Transported with our Munihood we have pressed on into the winds:
You therefore, mortal men, behold our natural bodies and no more.
The Muni, made associate in the holy work of every god,
Looking upon all varied forms, flies through the region of the air." [2]

[1] p. 402. [2] X, 136, 2–4.

Alongside of this wild form of ecstasy there was growing up in Vedic times a new sort of religious feeling. To be sure, the attitude of the worshiper most often depicted in the hymns is of a purely commercial character and is epitomized by the expression, "Here is butter, give us cows." But we should be doing the ancient Indians injustice were we to suppose that their attitude toward their gods was entirely one of *do ut des*. The hymns, indeed, being written chiefly for ritualistic purposes, are not the fitting medium for the expression of purely personal emotion, but even in the hymns are to be found traces of a feeling of deep longing for at least the approval in a personal way of the god to whom the singer addressed his prayer. How old such a feeling was we cannot say: it may have originated during Vedic times or it may reach far back into the Aryan past; but whenever it arose, its birth marked a turning point in the history of religion. There was no raving ecstasy on the one hand, nor on the other hand was the gift of the god sought and the gift only. The god himself, or at least his personal approval, was longed for. Listen to this hymn to Varuna: —

"Yearning for the wide-seeing one, my thoughts move onward unto him. . . .
Once more together let us speak.
Varuna, hear this call of mine, be gracious unto us this day,
Longing for help I cried to thee." [1]

[1] R. V., I, 25, 16, 17, 19. Cf. also VII, 86, 2, and 88, 3–6, for somewhat similar expressions toward Varuna.

This is a very different sort of thing from the naïve hymns to Surya and the Dawn, or the businesslike petitions to Indra; there is real religious feeling here, a longing, though but faint, for a closer intimacy with the divine. In religion it is generally true that longing creates its own satisfaction; and so it proved in this case. It was but a step — though a long one — from the "yearning for the wide-seeing one" to the mystic satisfaction in union with Brahman.

The growth of the mystic germ in India is hidden from us. The hymns, written as most of them were by professional singers for ritualistic use at sacrifices, were ill-fitted to convey mystic feeling, and the liturgical Brahmanas were still more unsuitable. Hence we may suppose a gradual growth of the Religion of Feeling throughout the early period, and shall not be surprised when it breaks upon us, full-blown, in the Upanishads.

If the Upanishads be considered on their intellectual side only, they are full of contradictions. They disagree on nearly every point. Some, as pointed out in the last chapter, are idealistic, some pantheistic, some theistic, some even tend toward materialism; in some Brahman is the Absolute, in others he is a personal and finite god. But from the standpoint of feeling the Upanishads are at one. "It is not a new philosophy, it is a new religion, that the Upanishads offer. This is no religion of rites and ceremonies — it is a religion for suffering humanity. It is a religion that comforts the afflicted and gives

to the soul 'that peace which the world cannot give.'"[1] That the Upanishads have a philosophical side no one can deny, but the message in which they all unite is religious rather than philosophical; it is a matter of feeling even more than of thought. And that message is the unity — apprehended by immediate intuition — of the individual soul with the Soul of all things.

"That which is the subtile essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self. And, O Svetaketu, that art thou."[2]

"The ocean transformed through the action of clouds, into the form of rivers, etc., ceases to be itself; so indeed hast thou forgotten thyself through the power of conditions. O friend! remember thy full self. *Thou art Brahman*, the ground of existence, the All."[3]

This immediate consciousness of identity with the Eternal is an experience whose joy and blessedness surpass all that the world can give; it is an emotional state of great intensity.

"A particle of Its bliss supplies the bliss of the whole universe, everything becomes enlightened in Its light; nay all else appears worthless after a sight of that essence; I am indeed this supreme eternal Brahman."[4]

"The One, omnipotent inner self of all beings manifests Himself as the manifold; none but those

[1] Hopkins, p. 239.
[2] Chand., VI, 13, 3.
[3] Svaraj'yasiddhi.
[4] Vijnanananka.

who see Him in themselves find eternal happiness." [1]

"The bliss of Brahman! — speech and mind fall back baffled and ashamed; all fear vanishes in the knowing of that bliss." [2]

"Through knowing Him who is more subtile than subtile, who is creator of everything, who has many forms, who embraces everything, the Blessed Lord — one attains peace without end." [3]

"There is one ruler, the Self, within all things, who makes the one form manifold. The wise who perceive Him within themselves, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others. There is one eternal thinker, thinking non-eternal thoughts, who, though one, fulfills the desires of many. The wise who perceive Him within themselves, to them belongs eternal peace, not to others. They perceive that highest indescribable, saying, This is that. How then can I understand it? Has it its own light or does it reflect light? The sun does not shine there, nor the moon and the stars, nor these lightnings, and much less this fire. When He shines, everything shines after Him; by His light all this is lighted." [4]

But this mystic union or identity with Brahman and its ineffable joy is not to be gained by mere intellectual assent to a proposition. One who by arguments solely had been led to accept the doctrine of the Upanishads and who stopped where the argu-

[1] Katha.
[2] Taittiriya.
[3] Cvet, 4, 14.
[4] Katha, II, 5, 12–15.

ment stopped, might be a solipsist or a pantheist, but could never understand the real spirit of the Upanishads. It is not so much a question of the understanding as of the heart. Says the Bhagavadgita, "Every one derives his faith from the inmost tendency of his heart; the man is all faith, he *is* that which he *has* faith in." It is an emotional experience rather than a syllogism that lies at the basis of the one great common faith of the Upanishads. When discussing matters of the understanding, they often disagree with each other in many points that seem essentials, and even contradict themselves; but when it is a question of the vital emotional experience of mystic and blissful union with the spirit of the Cosmos, they are at one.

This experience, being emotional rather than logical, like the Tao of Lao-tse, cannot be taught. It cometh not forth save by fasting and prayer. It must be sought after and cultivated. How to find and realize it becomes the great practical question of the sages. For this many devices — all more or less alike — are used. Books are useful at the first stage, as are the words of a teacher. Yet these of themselves are only propædeutics, and can never give the self-realization of Brahman. The "firm holding back of the senses" and the repression of desire are more adequate means. In later times definite rules of ascetic practices, of managing the breath, of contemplation, were laid down, by which one might attain to the condition desired. Similar

rules were especially elaborated by the Yogins, who sought, not the state of union with Brahman above described, but rather the disunion of the (individual) self from the body.[1] The methods followed by all the mystics were in principle the same. Two things were sought by them: (1) the narrowing and the unification of consciousness, (2) the intensification of a single central emotion. The ordinary life of many discordant aims and many distracting thoughts and experiences and of constant change was felt to be unworthy and unsatisfying, and the mystic sought to unify his conscious life and give it some sort of permanence by crystallizing it about one central ideal of supreme worth. The method of gaining this end was, first, by means of ascetic practices of various kinds to weaken the bodily impulses and to destroy all interest in the natural bodily pleasures which ordinarily captivate the attention and distract the thought. This process must be carried on for a long time before the attempt is made to reach the ecstatic condition. When at length the body is completely conquered, another series of processes, both physical and mental, having the same general aim, must be gone through as an immediate preparation for the mystic state. All this is minutely described in some of the later Upanishads and the Yoga Sutras. One must seat himself in a quiet place and in such a position that neither bodily pain nor bodily pleasure shall

[1] Cf. Garbe, "Samkhya und Yoga," p. 50.

distract his attention. The stream of consciousness must be narrowed by fixating the sight upon a single point — as, for instance, upon the navel — or by repeating endlessly the syllable *Om*. Gradually all consciousness of the body disappears.[1] The object chosen for contemplation — be it Brahman, or the freedom of the atman or soul — now gradually fills the conscious field to the exclusion of all else; the whole life is unified by it; the constantly changing character of the stream gives place to the comparative permanence of this one idea; and the great mass of vague feeling crystallizes about it, and streams away from it, like a halo round the head of a saint. The one emotion, occupying thus the whole consciousness, swells to enormous proportions, and becomes identical with all reality. The self is entirely forgotten and lost in the glory of the one emotional experience.

"As the bird breaking its bonds
Fearless soars into the air,
So the soul breaking its bonds
Escapes the chains of Samsara.

"As the flame, burning awhile,
Sinks at last to nothingness,
So the soul, its works consumed,
Sinks at last to nothingness." [2]

[1] Cf. the Kschurika Up., verses 1-8, where the various parts of the body, from the toes up, are described as gradually sinking out of consciousness — an excellent piece of introspection.

[2] Kschurika Up., 22 and 23. From Deussen's German translation.

"To nothingness;" for the self is entirely forgotten, and the ecstatic condition, if prolonged, results in complete unconsciousness. It is a clear case of self-hypnotization.

This general description applies, as I said above, to the trances of all the Indian mystics. As the character of an emotion, however, is very largely determined by the ideational core around which it centers, it cannot be supposed that the emotional state attained by the Yogin, though induced by similar external means, was identical with that of the pantheistic and theistic mystics who sought union with the One. There is, however, sufficient similarity to be of some psychological interest. The emotion of the Yogin is often one of great peace, though it does not seem to be of so intense and blissful a nature as that described in my quotations from the Upanishads. The physical means used to bring about the two states, and so far as we can see the bodily processes accompanying the two, were practically the same. In both there was a deadening of the senses, a narrowing of the field of consciousness, which approximated to the hypnotic condition, a tense concentration upon a single idea. The difference in the resulting emotions seems to have been due entirely to the ideational content around which the feeling elements centered—in one case the thought of union or identity with the personal or impersonal Brahman, in the other the idea of freedom from the bonds of the flesh. The resulting emotion, moreover, was differently

interpreted. To each it was the fulfillment of his desire. The mystic felt himself united with Brahman; the Yogin knew that he became free from the body.

There is another difference between the two which must be noted: in general and in the long run, Yoga tended more toward the abnormal and fantastic, the orthodox mysticism more toward the calmly religious and spiritual. The true successors of the early Yogins are to-day the Sadhus and Fakirs; while the mystics of the Upanishads have their present representatives in the Vedanta philosophers, whose feeling experience is akin to "cosmic emotion" rather than to the abnormal states of the Yogin.

Yoga, in short, is not so much the successor of Upanishad mysticism as of the old Vedic Tapas. The primitive notions of ecstasy gained through asceticism, modified somewhat by the ritualistic ideas of Brahmanic times, developed in an unbroken growth into the beliefs and practices of the Yogins.

The mysticism of the Upanishads differs from the repulsive phenomenon of possession, in its cruder forms, as day from night. The latter is a state of diseased excitability; the former is — or at least may be — completely normal and calm. It is for the mystic a quiet and uplifting joy in which one may take refuge from the miseries of the world. It gives him a vantage ground from which he may defy the attacks of fortune and upon which he may feel himself superior to all the chances of the phenomenal world. "The wise, finding sweet rest in the supreme

Essence, continue forever to enjoy it within, though going in the ways of the world without."[1] There is no trace here of hysteria or insanity, nor of the fantastic and revolting performances of the shaman and the medicine man. Yet we must remember that the two agree in springing, not from the senses nor from the understanding, but from that vast background of feeling so intimately connected with the life functions of the organism, and large enough to send forth evil and ugly products as well as good and beautiful ones. It is noticeable also that, so far as we have gone, the productions of this field bear upon them a mark of certainty that neither the senses nor the understanding are able to give the beliefs which they produce. The tree and the sun are given up for gods of a more intellectual nature; the worshiper of Indra, the god of the understanding, needs at times to prop his weak faith as best he may, or even doubts the existence of his god; but he who has once been possessed by spirits, evil or good, and he who has experienced the union of his self with Brahman, can no more doubt the reality of spirits or of The Spirit than he can doubt his own existence.

[1] Panchadasi.

CHAPTER V

RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN ISRAEL

I HAVE chosen the religion of Israel as one of the objects of our study, both because of its immense influence upon modern Christian beliefs, and also because of its marked contrast to the religions of India. It would be hard to find two great religions more fundamentally different than are those of the Hindus and the Hebrews; and yet with all their contrast we shall find in the latter the same three phases of belief working themselves out in much the same way as in the former.

I

As to the Religion of Primitive Credulity, there is even less that needs here to be said than was the case when dealing with India. The immense force of tradition and authority, and the great weight of tribal customs in the earlier days, and of the Law in the later days of Hebrew history, these are matters of common knowledge and need only be mentioned to bring to the reader's mind the great rôle played by unquestioning and obedient acceptance of the presented in the religion of the devout Jew. Unhesitating credence for the teachings of the Past was in the

air; it was inhaled, so to speak, by the individual at every breath, and was so decidedly a characteristic of the race that Israel was one of the first peoples in history to collect and solidify the teachings of its Past into a sacred Canon. The books which went to make up this collection were so holy as to "defile the hands" — as do all things pertaining to the divine in early days — and so far beyond question or possibility of error that every syllable or letter of them must be handed down without the slightest alteration. This almost fetishistic view of the Scriptures which is found in the later days of the Hebrew race betokens indeed a somewhat complex psychological attitude, and involves self-conscious reasoning and deliberate argument quite as much as childlike acceptance of the given. It is far from being naïve; and yet it is obvious that primitive credulity plays an important part in it, and is one of the conditions that make it possible.

The respect for the Canon is one of the later products of the Hebrew religion, and primitive credulity of course had an important influence long before there was anything like a formulated Canon. It is manifest, as I have suggested, in the maintenance of tribal religious customs and the acceptance of ancestral beliefs from the earliest days. Nor is the sensuous correlate which we have found in other religions absent amongst the Israelites; for though, so far as we know, they never fancied that they saw their god, as the savage sees his tree or river god, or as the

Hindu saw Ushas or Surya, they felt the same yearning for the assurance of their senses as to the presence of the divine that is found among all early peoples. Hence the value of the many material objects used in his worship that were supposed to have a mysterious connection with the deity. The holy places of Palestine, the *messeba*, the *ashera*, the fetichistic stone in the Ark, the ephod, and the many images of Yahweh in the form of a bull or serpent, — all these things point to the need felt by the early Israelites for some sensuous means of strengthening their unreasoned and traditional faith.

That these objects were a great aid to devout worship there can be no doubt. At an age when abstraction is rare and religious sentiment has hardly yet been born, and when men think chiefly in concrete terms and deal only with the particular, religion must appeal directly to the senses or lose most of its hold over the imagination and the will. But as the intellect develops and thought occupies a constantly more important place in life, these sensuous props become less needful, and man who has climbed by means of them,

> "unto the ladder turns his back,
> Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
> By which he did ascend."

Thus it was in Israel. When the images were no longer needful for faith, the prophets and more advanced minds cried out against their use, and rightly;

for, lingering after they had ceased to be useful, they had become a clog to progress and delayed the further development of religious thought and feeling. The lower classes, the ultra-conservatives, who considered themselves the truly orthodox, clung, indeed, to the use of images as one of the sacred customs handed down by the Fathers; but in the course of time the prophets and their followers succeeded in branding the worship of visible objects as disloyalty to Yahweh and as the cause of his fierce anger. In fact, they even persuaded the people that the righteous Fathers never had approved of it. Jacob is depicted as destroying the teraphim of all his people; and Yahweh himself, at the very beginning of the desert wandering, according to the Deuteronomist, declared as one of the fundamental laws of Israel: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them."

It was not, however, till the days of the second Isaiah that image worship was so outgrown as to be the object, not of denunciation, but of ridicule. In a brilliant passage — Is. 44^{14-17} — the prophet identifies the gods of the Gentiles with their idols, and sets forth the absurdity of idolatry with the pen of a great satirist. The image worshiper "heweth him down cedars, and taketh the holm-tree and the oak, and strengtheneth for himself one among the trees of the

forest: he planteth a fir-tree and the rain doth nourish it. Then shall it be for a man to burn; and he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshipeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto. He burneth part thereof in the fire, with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire. And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even a graven image; he falleth down unto it and worshipeth, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god." [1]

In the author of this splendid satire we see the incarnation of the Reason overthrowing the tendency of primitive credulity to worship the visible and tangible. But long before these words were written, Thought had gained for itself a commanding position and had come to wield an immense influence over both the content and the form of religious belief.

II

As in India, so in Israel, the application of thought to religion resulted in a turning away from polytheism. With the Hebrews, as with the Hindus, the story of the Religion of the Understanding is the story of the growth of monotheism. Yet the moving force and the final goal of Hebrew thought are very different from those we found in India.

[1] Cf. also Is. $40^{19, 20}$, $41^{6, 7}$, $46^{6, 7}$, Jer. 10^{3-5}, Hab. 2^{18}, Ps. 115^{4-8}.

That the Israelites, when first met with in history, believed in many gods goes without saying. Yahweh was indeed their own national god, but they recognized the gods of the other nations as just as real as he. Neither were they strictly monolatrous, but, besides worshiping their teraphim or family gods, they saw nothing wrong in adopting for certain purposes the cult of foreign deities, as the agricultural Baals of Canaan. The story of their development from this crude form of faith up to ethical monotheism is in large part the story of Hebrew thought.

The two great elements in this development were the historical experience of the nation and the reflection of thoughtful individuals and of the people at large upon that experience. In no other nation is the immediate influence of the events of its history upon the growth of its concepts so clear. Both the elements mentioned were essential. Truly Israel was a peculiar people and its history was a peculiar history.

If I may be allowed the expression, the Hebrews were reflective but not philosophic. They were a thoughtful people, but their thought was in concrete and particular terms. The demand for unity and for a single explanation of all things, so characteristic of the Hindus, was theirs in but a slight degree. It was rather the particular facts of their experience that held their attention and determined their final *Weltanschauung*. Moreover, it was not metaphysics, but human history, that occupied their thoughts. The ultimate constitution of Reality did not particularly

interest them, but the immediate facts of life were always pressing for explanation. The Hebrews were a practical and an earnest people; for theoretical, cosmical questions they had little care; but the interpretation to be given to the facts of national life were not theoretical, but terribly real, and how one should classify and explain these facts might well make all the difference between life and death. Hence all their best thought was centered, not upon ontology, but on the philosophy of history.

Another racial characteristic which tends in some measure to explain the course taken by their thought is a certain pride of race and sense of uniqueness, common, indeed, in some measure to all peoples, but developed to an unusual degree in the Hebrews. Given such a race feeling, and given such a series of historical events in the early part of their history as will lead them to the belief that the thing which most of all differentiates them from other and inferior races is their religion, and it is easy to see that they will be likely to stick to it through thick and thin, to emphasize constantly more and more its importance, and finally to regard it as the only true religion and their god as the only true God.

The early history of the Israelites gave them, in fact, just this sense of the great importance of their religion, and of the peculiar relation in which they stood to their god. This relation was one fundamentally of gratitude. It was Yahweh, so their tradition told them, who of his own great mercy had

chosen Israel, having pity upon her because of her persecutions in the land of Egypt; it was Yahweh who, with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, had delivered her from the power of Pharaoh and led her through the perils of sea and desert into the Promised Land; and it was he again who had subdued her enemies before her. No other nation had so many things for which to thank her god. Moreover, this Yahweh was from the first a god who loved righteousness — that is, tribal righteousness — and hated iniquity. There never was a time, so far as we know, when he did not embody the highest of his people's moral ideals — for had he not of his own good grace done for them everything that they could ask? Hence when first settled in Canaan, we find the Israelites already assured from their own past experience of the greatness and goodness of their god.

The Canaanite and Philistine wars taught the same lesson, for it was the Yahweh religion alone which united the scattered tribes to oppose a common front to the foe, it was his servants the prophets that roused the people to resistance, it was in his name that they fought; "the sword of Yahweh" was their battle-cry. Hence it was felt, and rightly felt, that it was not Israel that had saved Yahweh, but Yahweh that had saved Israel. It was the logical conclusion from the premises; for had it not been for its religion, the nation would have been early swallowed up and absorbed by the surrounding Gentiles. From these wars, therefore, the Hebrews

emerged with greater confidence in the power of their god and greater gratitude to him than ever before; for the hero of the struggle for national existence had been, not Barak nor Gideon nor Saul nor David, but Yahweh. One of their ancient histories was entitled "The Book of the Wars of Yahweh"; and Deborah sings of the defeat of Sisera: —

> "Yahweh, when thou wentest forth out of Seir,
> When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
> The earth trembled, the heavens also dropped,
> Yea, the clouds dropped water.
> The mountains quaked at the presence of Yahweh,
> Even yon Sinai at the presence of Yahweh, the God of Israel." [1]

As the twelve scattered tribes drew together under Saul and David, the nation gained in importance in the minds of men, and with it the national god. Standing, as he did, moreover, as the representative and protector of the centralized government, he became more than formerly identified with the idea of law. As a general thing in the ancient world, political centralization meant religious centralization, and the god of the king came to stand for the ideal of all that was best in the kingdom.

Of course, in saying this I do not mean that the concept of Yahweh was ideally moral in the modern sense. Like other tribal gods, he was more or less ruled by whims; his action was by no means always

[1] Jud. $5^{4,5}$.

guided by moral considerations. As Wellhausen puts it, he had unaccountable moods. He is often angry without reason and repents merely because his wrath is cooled. Sometimes his action is regarded as wanton, as in 1 Sam. 26^{19}, where David, though conscious of his own innocence, thinks it quite probable that it is Yahweh who has stirred up Saul against him; and in 2 Sam. 24 we find him moving David to number the people and then punishing him for so doing by sending pestilence upon the land. The holiness of the primitive Yahweh, moreover, was more like electricity than like saintliness — a sort of physical effulgence that made too close approach to him dangerous and even fatal. It was not without good cause that the people exclaimed to Moses, "Let not God speak unto us lest we die." When the ark of Yahweh, having carried pestilence with it through all the Philistine country, was sent back by the five lords of the Philistines into Yahweh's land and came to a halt at Beth-shemesh, fifty thousand of the inhabitants came to their death by looking into it. "And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" [1] And when, in the next generation, David brought the ark up toward Jerusalem, the same mysterious, half-physical power brought instant death to Uzzah, who had innocently put forth his hand to steady the ark as it seemed about to fall from the cart. This unaccountable and terrible danger from the dread presence

[1] 1 Sam. $6^{19, 20}$.

of Yahweh made David fear to have the ark with him, so he had it placed in the house of Obed-Edom; where it wrought as mysterious and unreasonable a blessing as it had wrought reasonless injury to Uzzah and the men of Beth-shemesh.

Though all this must be admitted, however, it still is true that Yahweh always was to his people the type of all that was loftiest in morality. He had so long been distinguished above all things else by his goodness to them, that he had become identified in their minds with righteousness itself. The two words had the same connotation. Hence, as the Hebrew concept of righteousness grew, the concept of Yahweh grew with it, and whoever attained to a clearer vision than his fellows of justice and morality interpreted it as a deeper insight into the nature of his god. This development of the concept of deity was especially favored by the fact that Yahweh was connected with none of the forces of nature, which should hinder the free course of theological thought and empirically determine his character. Freer even than Varuna from all objective phenomena, he was in a position to absorb into himself whatever moral elevation and lofty ideals the leaders of his people attained to.

This righteous character of Yahweh is the key to the entire development of Hebrew religious thought; it is the basis of all their argument, the presupposition of all their reasoning. The problem of each successive generation is: given the righteousness of

Yahweh, how interpret politics and history? This question appears to have confronted the thoughtful as early as the ninth century. The Canaanite Baals had been absorbed and largely forgotten, the Phœnician Baals of Jezebel had been driven from the land; Yahweh alone was worshiped, and Israel naturally looked for his favor and for success against his enemies. The exact opposite occurred, and the nation was humbled before the Syrian foe. The more thoughtful Israelites, therefore, seem to have asked themselves again and again the cause of this strange fact.[1] That Yahweh was able to protect them was evident from his great deeds in the past. Only one explanation was possible: he must be angry with his people for having worshiped other gods, and his anger still lasted after the other gods had been put away. This then must have been a more terrible sin than they had ever supposed. And its importance must lie in the difference between Yahweh and all other gods. This was not merely a difference in power; the great distinction was that Yahweh alone was righteous. "So long as Yahweh differed merely in might and majesty from the gods of the nations, there was no right nor reason to declare the nullity of these latter. But now that a distinction in kind had taken the place of a difference in degree, that tendency to deny the reality of the gods, the tendency toward monotheism, was really present." [2]

[1] Cf. Kueuen, "The Religion of Israel."

[2] Kueuen, pp. 368, 369.

It was, of course, only a few of the leading minds who reasoned in the way indicated; and that any so reasoned is made likely only by the manifest progress between Elisha and the eighth-century prophets. But that some such idea was at least germinating in the thought of the nation there can be no doubt, for in the following century it gains clear expression in the words of the first of the great literary prophets — Amos.

Amos was the first of the six great individuals who reshaped the Yahweh religion.[1] That these six men were in some sense spokesmen of their people is, of course, true; had they not been, they could never have influenced their nation as they did. But it is also true that they were not spokesmen of their times. They were far in advance of their contemporaries and opposed current views by ideas that were often revolutionary. No one can understand the history of the Hebrew religion who does not appreciate the importance of these six individuals. Their work is not to be accounted for by any facts of geographical location and race psychology. Their contribution to the religion of their people was unique, and had it not been for them, the concept of Yahweh might well have had a very different development.

[1] The men referred to are, of course, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Second Isaiah. The work of three of them, however, — namely, Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel, — is not essential to our discussion; hence no mention will be made of them here.

In Amos the ethical nature of Yahweh suddenly reaches its zenith; without a word of warning there breaks upon us a moral conception of God which in many respects has never been surpassed. How Amos attained to such lofty ideas we do not know; it may be they were due to intuition [1] and to the affective life rather than to thought. But having them, it is evident that he must inevitably ascribe them to his God; and it is equally plain that the God of such a man as Amos must differ, not in degree, but in kind from the "gods of the nations."

The conception of the righteous Yahweh, the embodiment of his loftiest ideals, so filled the mind of the thoughtful Judean shepherd as he followed the flock, that it was borne in upon him — partly we may suppose through conscious reasoning, partly from the great background of his mind — that his God was too righteous to behold with careless eye the iniquities of foreign nations, and that in His infinite superiority to all other gods He must needs interfere directly to punish guilt and to avenge the innocent. "For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he did pursue his brother with the sword and did cast off all pity." "For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime." [2]

[1] In the sense defined on p. 43.

[2] Amos 1^{11}, 2^{1}.

This transcendent position of Yahweh above all other gods was a continuation of the thought that had been growing in Israel for many years; but the revolutionary idea that finds its first expression in Amos, and which meant a complete turning aside from the old tribal view of religion, breaks upon the reader in the words, "For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." [1]

Simple reasoning from the premises was quite enough to bring the prophet to this conclusion. His own moral intuitions and his feeling for righteousness made him disgusted with the immorality and oppression he saw about him, with the hypocrisy and outwardness of the official worship; and as Yahweh was to him the type of the moral ideal, he felt that these things must be even more abominable in Yahweh's sight than in his own. With so righteous a God and so sinful a people as his premises, he could come to no conclusion but the complete overthrow of the nation. Yahweh had punished His people in times past, but for smaller offences; exile and political death alone were consistent with such sin as he saw before him. Hence the conception of Yahweh made yet a further advance; He would not hesitate to destroy even His people, for the sake of justice. In truth, the very fact that Israel is His people brings with

[1] Amos 2^6.

it all the surer judgment. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; *therefore* will I punish you for your iniquities." It is vain for an unrighteous nation to trust that spite of their sins their god will protect them, and to prate of the "day of Yahweh." The day of Yahweh shall come; "but to what end is it for you? The day of Yahweh is darkness and not light." Amos has no hope to offer. Destruction and exile is the sure result of Israel's sin, for Yahweh is righteous. With the clear eye of a statesman he saw the great power Assyria looming up in the east, and he knew that without divine aid Israel must be crushed. To the future therefore he appealed for the vindication of his conception of God. And the coming victory of Assyria, which should fulfill his words, was to his mind really the victory of Yahweh; for Assyria, like all other nations, was only Yahweh's instrument.

These conceptions of Amos were, in part, scouted by the official classes and doubtless by the people; they were, in fact, the property of only a few thinkers in his time. But not long after they were forced upon popular acceptance by stern reality, when all the prophet's dire predictions were fulfilled by the Assyrian conquest. The pen of Amos would have had but little immediate influence in the cause of monotheism, but for the sword of Sargon.

The age of Amos marked a genuine crisis in the Hebrew religion. The concept of Yahweh had to be enlarged or else suffer complete destruction. There

was no third possibility. Men were come to the parting of the ways. To be sure, the conception of God which had been held by the orthodox up to this time and which still remained the official and popular creed of both priests and people, had served its turn well enough during the early days of Hebrew history and in the prosperous reign of Jeroboam the Great. In fact the people had never been so zealous in their worship, never so universally and extravagantly loyal to Yahweh, as at the time when Amos broke in upon them with his terrible denunciations. And yet it is altogether certain that this creed, which had maintained itself so easily in the days of Israel's prosperity, would have proved absolutely incapable of weathering the storm that was approaching, and would simply have gone to pieces on the rocks. The conception of God which it involved was consistent only with at least a fair degree of national prosperity, and was too small and too limited to stand the test of the disasters which began with the death of Jeroboam. The facts of history ceased to point to the kind of god in whom Israel had, up to this time, believed. If Yahweh were only a tribal god, then with the destruction of His people he would cease to be a god altogether. If belief in Him was to survive the Assyrian conquest, it had to be overhauled and based on a new and enlarged conception of His nature. And this was the work of Amos.

In looking back at the great religious heroes of the world we often forget that their work was largely

critical and destructive, and that their orthodox contemporaries naturally regarded them as iconoclasts and schismatics. So it was with Amos. He was certainly considered a heretic by the orthodox of his day. He railed against the most sacred places and the most sacred things. "For thus saith Yahweh unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live; but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba. . . . I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I receive the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. . . . But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." [1] We may well imagine how the epithet of "mere morality" may have been stamped upon his teachings by the upholders of the traditional faith; and how the orthodox leaders of the people, who regarded anything new as necessarily false, looked askance at his heretical innovations. And we know how he was driven out of the shrine at Beth-el and out of the land by the high priest, the pillar of orthodoxy. Yet if he and those like him had held their peace, the religion of Yahweh would have perished in the next generation amid the ruins of Samaria, or at best would have lingered out a wretched existence till the capture of Jerusalem, and would then have vanished from the earth. The

[1] Amos $5^{4, 5, 21, 22, 24}$.

only thing that could make the religion of Yahweh proof against disaster and give it a sure and permanent foundation was a new and larger conception of the divine, a faith broad and catholic enough to accept the whole of reality and face the truth whatever it might be. And the greatest step in this direction in the whole course of Hebrew history was that taken by Amos.

Much, however, still remained to be done. Yahweh was still somewhat local. He might allow Israel to be destroyed, but He Himself dwelt in a peculiar sense at Jerusalem, the Holy City, and doubtless to the great majority of the people His religion was identified with the cult at the various Judean shrines. It was still incomprehensible to most that even Yahweh could remain a god if He had no nation to worship Him. God and people were still reciprocal terms. The strange destruction of the army of Sennacherib, fulfilling in so striking a manner Isaiah's prophecy, confirmed the people in this belief and turned back the concept of Yahweh toward the old naturalistic and tribal form. And it must be admitted that this was the obvious conclusion to draw from the events; so far as logic goes it was quite as legitimate a piece of reasoning in the philosophy of history as many of the arguments of the prophets, and down to the very fall of the city it was the orthodox view. In fact, it might very well have given the decisive and fatal turn to the development of Jewish theology, had it not

been for the rise at this time of the greatest of the prophets.[1] For it was the work of Jeremiah — and of Nebuchadrezzar — to show that Yahweh was independent of place, independent of worship, independent of people; that He was, in short, the God of the whole earth.

The course of Jeremiah's reasoning was probably much the same as that of Amos — based, namely, upon Yahweh's power and righteousness as shown in all Hebrew history, including, in Jeremiah's case, Amos's own prophecy and its fulfillment in the destruction of the northern kingdom by Assyria. The condition of Judah seemed analogous to that of Israel in Amos's time, and in Babylon Yahweh had an instrument for the punishment of sin, quite as powerful as Assyria had been. The unitary demand of the reason, moreover, as I shall point out later, doubtless had much to do in bringing the prophet to his conclusions. But there was more in Jeremiah's prophecies than conscious reasoning, and here, as so often elsewhere, we find thought and feeling too closely interwoven to be separated even for purposes of exposition. It was probably a combination of thought and the immediate insight of a religious genius — an intuition which came without conscious reasoning, a feeling for the greatness and goodness and uniqueness of his God — that finally carried him

[1] In a more detailed work mention should here be made of the writers of certain portions of Deuteronomy, who seem to have been the first absolute monotheists. Cf. esp. Deut. 4–11.

to the complete monotheistic point of view. The gods of the heathen are "no gods," as the heathen shall themselves one day recognize. "O Yahweh, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge in the day of affliction, unto thee shall the nations come from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited nought but lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." [1] "But Yahweh is the true God; he is the living God, and an everlasting King; at his wrath the earth trembleth, and the nations are not able to abide his indignation. . . . He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding hath he stretched out the heavens." [2]

With this extension of Yahweh's activity to the entire earth, all nations are made His instruments, and the scope of Jewish thought is no longer confined to the philosophy of its own history, but deals henceforth with world history, and sees in it all the hand of its God. And here we come again upon the trace of that demand of the reason for a unitary explanation which led the thinkers of India to the concept of Brahman. Up to this point Jewish thought had been content with many explanations of human history; each nation had its own god, and doubtless the fate of each was determined by the will of its god and by his power as compared with that of other gods. But in the philosophy of history, as well as in meta-

[1] Jer. 16^{19}. [2] Jer. $10^{10, 12}$.

physics, the demand for a single explanation must sooner or later make itself felt — spite of the many incongruous facts — and the more rationalistic minds will work out a single hypothesis for the interpretation of all events. It was in large part this impulse which led Jeremiah to the view that Yahweh's purpose was sufficient to explain all history, and when this standpoint was gained, the gods of the nations became altogether superfluous and were sloughed off like an outgrown shell that had been too long closing in the germinating thought.

These lofty concepts of Jeremiah, though repudiated by prince and priest and people during his life, were ultimately adopted by the whole nation, Nebuchadrezzar having done for him what Sargon did for Amos, and the fall of the city being almost universally interpreted as a confirmation of the prophet's ideas, as it was a fulfillment of his predictions.

An example, however, of the double interpretation to which nearly every historical event is open to those coming to it with different preconceptions, is seen in the complaints of the people against Jeremiah, immediately after the fall of the city; they attribute the national misfortune to their neglect, not of Yahweh, but of the "queen of heaven" (the planet Venus?). In fact their argument is not bad, and is a clear attempt to apply to history what we should call the Method of Single Difference: "For then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.

But since we left off burning incense to the queen of heaven, and pouring out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by famine." [1]

But, as I have said above, it was Jeremiah's explanation and Jeremiah's concepts that were adopted by the nation as a whole,[2] and with the fall of Jerusalem and the political death of the kingdom was born the complete monotheism of the Jews. It remained only for the prophet (or prophets) of the exile known as the Second Isaiah to ennoble the conception of God by his rhetoric and to carry out in still larger manner and with broader scope the philosophy of universal history begun by his predecessors. From his more commanding point of view and position in time, he is persuaded, he can understand many things which to them were still dark and inexplicable. The whole history of the world is in his eyes a clear demonstration of the constant guidance of the great God. The old problems why Yahweh chose Israel in the first place and why, having chosen her, He gave her up to her foes, who, spite of her sins, were still more sinful than she, are now lighted up; the great enigma of the Hebrew philosophy of history is solved. Israel indeed He has chosen, but it is not alone for Israel's sake, but that through her the divine and universal plan might be carried out. "It is too light a thing that thou art unto me a servant, to raise up

[1] Jer. $44^{17,18}$.

[2] Cf. Deut. 4–11, Ps. 97, 104, etc., etc.

the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; so I appoint thee a light of the nations, to be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." [1] "I, Yahweh, have called thee in righteousness and will hold thy hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." [2] The Gentile nations, moreover, are not mere implements of punishment, as in Amos and Jeremiah, but ends in themselves as well; and as in the past He used Assyria and Babylon in working out His great designs, so even now He is raising up Cyrus the Persian, to whom He speaks directly through His prophet: —

"Thus saith Yahweh to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him, . . . I will go before thee, and make the rough places smooth; I will break in pieces the doors of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; . . . that thou mayest know that it is I, Yahweh, who call thee by thy name, even the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel my chosen, I have called thee by thy name; I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am Yahweh and there is none else; besides me there is no God; I will gird thee, though thou hast not known me; that they may know from the rising of the sun and from the west that

[1] Is. 49^6.
[2] Is. $42^{6,7}$.

there is none besides me; I am Yahweh and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am Yahweh, that doeth all these things." [1]

With the second Isaiah, Yahweh is grown to be not merely the only but the universal God; he has clean burst the shell of the tribal deity and has become the God of all nations.

But while the problems of the philosophy of history were now cleared up, there remained one problem in the life of the individual, about which Jewish thought was long troubled — the Problem of Evil. How is it possible that, if God is just and almighty, the righteous are so often afflicted, while the evil flourish like a green bay tree? The less observant and the less empirical thinkers — the rationalists, we might call them — had always insisted that these were not the facts, for the very good reason that they could not be. The righteous were always prosperous, the wicked always unfortunate, because it must be so. But that this easy optimism would not square with the facts became to the thoughtful more evident, and they cast about on all sides for an explanation. The most famous of these attempts fell in the Persian period and is preserved to us in the original book of Job (Chaps. 3–31, according to Professor Toy). Job absolutely repudiates the old solution of the problem. Conscious of his own integrity, he throws

[1] Is. 45^{1-7}.

down the challenge to the Almighty to point out wherein he has committed any sin at all proportionate to his suffering.[1] Yet the obvious logical conclusion he does not draw — namely, that God is lacking either in justice or in power. He is driven, therefore, to an agnostic position; he has no solution for the problem. By searching he cannot find out God, nor know the Almighty unto perfection; His ways are not as our ways nor His thoughts as our thoughts. And yet though mere reasoning from the premises might very well have led him to the conclusion of an unjust God or to a doubt if there were any God at all, his unreasoning feeling and the religious demands of his nature forced him to cling to his faith, with the exclamation, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

To sum up the results of this section, the development of the concept of God in the Hebrew Religion was due to the thoughtful — and in part the emotional — reaction of the people, and especially of its leaders, upon the events of human life. As the leaders of thought, from pondering over the meaning of history, gained higher conceptions of their God, they appealed with keen political foresight to future events to confirm their judgments, and as the expected events or something like them often followed, they forced upon the rank and file conceptions approaching somewhat to their own. Since there

[1] Cf. esp. Chap. 31.

was always more or less sin in the community, and since, on the other hand, Yahweh's mercy might at any moment forgive sin, the hypothesis of an all-powerful and righteous and merciful God provided Israel with an absolutely infallible key to all past history and to all possible history. As Hebrew thought developed and went more deeply into things, and no longer confined itself to the events of one small district, it felt dissatisfied with a plurality of explanations for the new facts that came under its cognizance. It felt impelled to subsume all events under one formula, and the formula chosen for this was, of course, the one that had been so successfully used in the smaller sphere — the righteousness and power of Yahweh. Yet Hebrew thought never reached the monistic position of Brahmanism; for, in fact, the very concept — the righteousness of Yahweh — which had been most influential in bringing about monotheism stood in the way of absolute monism. The notion of such a monism seems never to have entered the head of a single ancient Hebrew; it was out of all relation to their way of thinking. All their best thought was based upon the moral category, and this, unlike the ontological category, is dependent upon the existence of real distinctions. A god whose chief characteristic it was to be of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who could not look upon iniquity, could hardly develop into an Absolute who should merge evil and good into himself, and to whom "shadow and sunlight are the same." The

empirical nature of Jewish thought also had the same tendency. Looking out upon the world they saw it filled with much evil as well as much good; and though they believed that the purposes which they considered to be those of their God would eventually triumph, they saw their progress was most slow, and that it was purchased at great cost. And as they were empiricists rather than rationalists by nature, these facts were accepted at their face value; and any tendency that there may have been in their ethical monotheism toward absolute monism was thus killed in the germ.

That in the course of their reasonings their premises were often insufficient for their conclusions is indeed perfectly obvious to us; and indeed we have little reason to doubt that it would have been obvious to them as well had the conclusions in question been based solely on reasoning. Not only is this probable in itself; it is also made clear by the occasional skeptical passages in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. The truth is, the ancient Hebrew, like most other people, used his reason not merely to come to new conclusions, but also, and chiefly, to justify beliefs which arose in him from an entirely different source. And had it not been for the constant guidance and reënforcement given to his faith by religious feeling, he would never have evolved the religion for which he stands. To comprehend the true nature of his faith and its most unassailable foundations, therefore, we must turn to the Religion of Feeling.

III

The phenomenon of possession meets us among the early Hebrews as among all peoples at their stage of culture, although our first account of it (1 Sam. 10) treats it as something new in Israel; and in fact it seems to have been introduced at the time of Samuel and Saul by contagion, so to speak, from the Canaanites or Arabians. But wherever it came from it was the beginning of Hebrew prophecy. The *nebiim*, or prophets, like the dervishes of the East to-day, were highly excitable persons, who lived constantly near the boundary of that chaotic and irresponsible, yet at times wonderfully productive, region of consciousness of which the sanest of us occasionally catch glimpses; and who by the stimulus of music, the dance, the repetition of some sacred syllable or formula, and each other's presence, were able to work themselves into a fit of frenzy in which they might say and do things for which they could afterward give no account. Aroused perhaps by anger at the Philistine domination, these fanatical devotees of Yahweh wandered in bands through the country, playing on various musical instruments, dancing and driving themselves to sacred madness, which probably ended at times in complete unconsciousness. Samuel — himself a seer, or clairvoyant-by-the-grace-of-Yahweh — foretells to Saul, "Thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp,

before them; and they will be prophesying: and the spirit of Yahweh will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man."[1] One should note here that it is the "*Spirit of Yahweh*" that "comes upon" men mightily and makes them prophesy; and we read in the tenth verse, that when Saul met the prophets, the "*Spirit of God* came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them." That the influence of such a wild scene as is presented by a group of Oriental dervishes must have great power over a sympathetic observer who holds the same general belief as they, and that it will tend to become contagious, will be evident to every one who has witnessed such a scene; though in a mood for criticism or even for ridicule, one finds one's self involuntarily swaying to and fro in cadence with them and even forming incipiently in one's speech organs the sacred syllables of their chant. It is no wonder, therefore, that Saul found himself "prophesying" among them. This is, of course, merely a case of the familiar phenomenon of unconscious imitation through suggestion, bringing on finally a state akin to hypnosis. But to the devout believer in Yahweh such a sight as Saul suddenly becoming ecstatic meant as a matter of course that the divine afflatus had descended upon him as upon the others, and we may be sure that no one was more perfectly persuaded of this than Saul himself.

[1] 1 Sam. $10^{5,6}$.

A similar occasion is described in 1 Sam. 19, where Saul sends three messengers, one after another, with commands to David, who has taken refuge among the prophets. No sooner do the messengers reach the ecstatic band than the spirit of Yahweh comes upon them in the same mysterious manner, and they too "prophesy." At length Saul himself goes: "and the spirit of God came upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night." [1]

In course of time the rougher elements of prophecy were shaken off, and the phenomenon became less wild and more spiritual; yet up to the end, prophecy remained with many of its representatives a kind of sacred madness. "Elisha on one occasion needs the impulse of music before he can reveal the oracle of Yahweh; and the four hundred prophets who prophesy at Ahab and Jehosaphat's request at the gates of Samaria must clearly be conceived as in a condition of unnatural excitement and exaltation." [2] The old view of the *nebiim* is still found in 2 Kings 9^{11}, where the word "prophet" is used as synonymous with madman or mad enthusiast, — implying that an ecstatic condition and even utterances due to a kind of possession were still expected of the prophets.

[1] 1 Sam. $19^{23,24}$.

[2] Montefiori, "Hibbert Lectures," p. 95.

And even in Jer. 29^{26} we find madness still connected in a general way with the popular idea of prophecy. But it must be remembered that this madness was a sacred madness, and that both prophet and beholder believed that in this mysterious way the Spirit of Yahweh made connection with the human spirit.

This early form of prophecy has almost the same relation to the later form as Tapas in India bore to the mysticism of the Upanishads; the two phenomena are clearly distinct, yet both have their roots in the vast feeling background of consciousness.

The new character of religious feeling and the great difference between it and the wildness of early prophetism strikes one at once on opening the Book of Amos. With considerable emphasis Amos asserts that he is no prophet nor one of the sons of the prophets. There is nothing about him that suggests the old shamanistic phenomenon of 1 Sam. 10 and 19. Yet he is as certain that it is Yahweh who bids him speak as any of his predecessors were of their own prophetic calling. "Surely the Lord Yahweh will do nothing, but he revealeth his secrets unto his servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord Yahweh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" [1]

These words of Amos are typical of all the great prophets. They are sure that what they speak is

[1] Amos $3^{7,8}$.

not their own; it is forced upon them from without. As pointed out in the last chapter, many of the convictions of the prophets are not to be accounted for by conscious reasoning, but seem to be rather matters of religious feeling or intuition. Still oftener does this seem to be the case with their particular pronouncements. If we may trust their statements at all, we must admit that a great many of their declarations were not consciously reasoned to, but came full-formed into their minds, and bear with them that sense of externality which Professor James has shown to be so often characteristic of the productions of the subconscious. The prophets did not so much reason as hear and see; they felt themselves to be merely the channels through which a greater Consciousness with which they made connections expressed itself. Personally they considered themselves but passive instruments unable to resist this greater will — "The Lord Yahweh hath spoken, who can but prophesy?"

The external character of the message is signified by the expression so common among the prophets, "the hand of Yahweh." Thus Isaiah says "Yahweh spoke to me with a strong hand and instructed me."[1] In Jeremiah this externality is so strong that he resists it, but in vain. "O Yahweh," he exclaims, "thou hast persuaded me, and I was persuaded; thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am become a laughing-stock all the day, every one

[1] Is. 8^{11}.

mocketh me. For as often as I speak, I cry out; I cry, Violence and destruction" — that is, if he opens his lips, he involuntarily utters the unwelcome message of Yahweh which is made a reproach and a derision to him all the day. Yet speak he must, for "if I say, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name, then there is as it were a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I am weary with forbearing, and I cannot contain." [1] With Ezekiel the external and compulsory nature of the message is no less striking. With him it usually takes the form of a vision, and these visions he describes with great exactness, often noting the time, place, and circumstances under which they came. He also uses more than any other prophet the expression "the hand of Yahweh was upon me." "And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in my house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the hand of the Lord Yahweh fell there upon me. Then I beheld, and, lo, a likeness, as the appearance of fire" [2] — etc. "Then the spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of Yahweh from his place. And I heard the noise of the wings of the living creatures as they touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, even the noise of a great rushing. So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away; and I went in bitterness,

[1] Jer. 20^{7-9}. Cf. also Jer. $17^{15,16}$.
[2] Ezek. $8^{1,2}$.

in the heat of my spirit; and the hand of Yahweh was strong upon me." [1]

The consciousness of the immediate inspiration of Yahweh seems to have gradually brought with it for the prophets a new meaning into religion. Up till their time Yahweh had been only the God of the nation; with them He begins to be the God of the individual. This is not confined to any one prophet. We may find a suggestion of it even in Amos and certainly in Hosea. It comes into prominence, however, only with Jeremiah. He is abandoned by all and only Yahweh is left him. "But now we find what we have never met with in any prophet before this time. Jeremiah appears in continual dialogue with Yahweh. He complains, he contradicts him, contends with him, defends himself against him, but is ever worsted by him. Yet in the midst of his grief and despair, he awakes to the consciousness that the words of Yahweh are really the joy and the rapture of his heart, because Yahweh's name has been put upon him, that is to say because he is Yahweh's possession." [2] "Heal me, Yahweh, that I may be healed; help me, that I may be helped, for thou art my praise." [3] "Denounce, and we will denounce him, say all my familiar friends . . . and we shall take our revenge on

[1] Ezek. 3^{12-14}. For other passages illustrating the externality of the message cf. 1 K 22^{19}; Amos 7^{1}, 9^{1}; Is. 6; Jer. 1^{11-18}; Ez. 1^{1-3}, 2, 3^{22}, 8, 9–11, 37, 40–48; Zech. 1^{8}–6^{8}.

[2] Budde, "Religion of Israel to the Exile," p. 197.

[3] Jer. 17^{14}.

him. But Yahweh is with me as a mighty one and a terrible; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail. . . . But, O Yahweh of hosts, that triest the righteous, that seest the heart and the mind, . . . unto thee have I revealed my cause." [1]

This consciousness of the presence of Yahweh with the individual and for the sake of the individual, and known, not by sight nor by reasoning, but by the immediate testimony of feeling, was never thereafter lost among the Hebrews. It is to be found — though in a much less attractive form than in Jeremiah — even in Ezekiel. The establishment of the synagogue had much to do in spreading among the people this new form of religious experience; for in these less formal gatherings of Yahweh's people the devout worshiper could himself take part in the service, without the intervention of priest or bloody victim, and thus felt a direct and personal relation to his God which his ancestors had never conceived. But nowhere else is this form of religious feeling more fully expressed than in the Psalms. These, indeed, never go to the extremes of Indian and Christian mysticism, in the narrower and more technical meaning of the word; they do not speak of ecstasy nor of God being *in* man. But for them God is "very near" to man, and they are pervaded with a calm, glad sense of His presence and with a simple and

[1] Jer. 20^{10-12}. Cf. also Jer. 15^{15-21} and 32^{36-41}.

earnest yearning after Him that make them unique in literature.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is none on earth that I desire besides thee." [1]
"As the hart panteth after the water brooks
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and appear before God?" [2]
"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there:
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;
Even there shall thy hand lead me,
And thy right hand shall hold me.
If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me up,
Even the night shall be light about me.
For the darkness hideth not from thee,
But the night shineth as the day:
The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
* * * * * * * * * * *
How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand:
When I awake I am still with thee." [3]
"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside still waters.
He restoreth my soul;

[1] Ps. 73^{25}.

[2] Psalm $42^{1,2}$. — Cf. Rig Veda I. 25, 16, 17, 19, quoted in the last chapter.

[3] Ps. $139^{7-12, 17-18}$.

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me."[1]

Between the 23d Psalm and the phenomenon of possession and prophetism as depicted in 1 Sam. 19, there is the same difference as that between civilization and savagery. But both are matters of feeling rather than of reason or of sense; and in both cases the individual is conscious of the presence of a great power or a great life, not his, yet close to him, and which he feels he must obey and may rely upon.

IV

In these last three chapters I have traced (perhaps at undue length) the story of the three kinds of religious belief. The story in its general outlines is much the same in all religions, India and Israel being merely typical of mankind in general. Everywhere the same three factors are at work. Everywhere we find the primitive basis of belief giving way before the advance of thought, thought bringing forth its twin offspring, theology and doubt, and turning at every crisis for strength and sure support to religious feeling and the instinctive demands which the human organism makes of the Cosmos. Among every people, moreover, in which the Religion of Feeling has attained its full development, we find two

[1] Ps. 23^{1-4}.

perfectly distinct kinds of religious emotion. One is a violent form of excitement, a passionate, abnormal flinging away of all self-control, a sort of religious intoxication indulged in largely for its delightful effects, a sacred madness, typified by the Dionysian dance of the Greeks and the shamanism of the Mongols. It is very susceptible of cultivation, and elaborate methods are concocted and pursued to bring it about. It is seen at its best in uncivilized peoples or among the less cultured members of civilized communities. The second type, though intense, is calm and quiet in its expression and usually spontaneous in its origin. Unlike the first, it is inhibited rather than induced by the presence of a crowd. It comes most often in solitude and it never goes to the fantastic and abnormal extremes of the first type. A fairly high scale of culture seems to be the condition of its appearance; one must look for it, not among the ecstatic dancers and medicine-men of the uncivilized, but among the Indian mystics, the Hebrew prophets, and the great religious leaders the world over.

These various influences, primitive and authoritative, intellectual, emotional, are to be found, as I have said, in all developed religions; and to this Christianity is no exception. They make themselves felt both in the historical Christianity of the past and in the living Christianity of the present. To trace their influence here — in both the life of the religion and the life of the individual — will be the task of the following chapters.

CHAPTER VI

THREE PHASES OF CHRISTIAN BELIEF

In an exhaustive treatment of the development of religious belief an account should of course be given, at least in outline, of the origin and growth of the Christian idea of God. To attempt to give such an account here, however, would expand this work to most unwieldy proportions, and I shall therefore take the Christian conception of Deity for granted, so to speak, merely pointing out in passing its principal historical sources, namely: (1) The Hebrew ethical monotheism already discussed, with its decidedly anthropomorphic God. (2) The religious experience of Jesus — His sense of direct communion with the divine — which has had such an immense influence on all subsequent religious history. (3) The ideas of incarnation, atonement, the theory of the Logos, and other doctrines of the New Testament writers. (4) The intellectual monotheism of Plato and Aristotle (particularly the latter) which depicted God as removed from the world and as being pure thought, self-contemplation, omniscience, and the principle of order. (5) The mystic vein in Greek religion and philosophy, starting amid the wild dances

of Dionysos, refined in the teachings of the Orphic cult, and brought to full expression and handed on to Christianity by the Neo-Platonic school and Dionysius the Areopagite. I shall say no more in this place of the content of the idea of God, but shall devote this chapter to a consideration of our three psychological bases of belief as seen in certain phases of Christianity. For this purpose I shall use the attitude of mediæval Christendom toward the Church as illustrative of the Religion of Primitive Credulity; Christian Mysticism as the type of the Religion of Feeling; and the rationalism of the eighteenth century in England as an example of the Religion of the Understanding.

I

The Middle Ages, as every one knows, were preeminently characterized by the dominance of authority in all fields of thought and particularly in matters of faith. Both kinds of authority as distinguished in previous chapters were of the greatest importance all through this period, and were often so intermingled that it is impossible to separate them in any psychological description of the faith of the times. Authority — especially in the earlier part of the Middle Ages — was the one great basis of faith, but it was so both in the sense of primitive credulity and as an argument from which one might reason. In the faith of the common people naïve and unthinking acceptance of the teachings of the Church certainly played

the greatest part, and even among the philosophers and theologians it held the preponderant influence. The traditional teachings of the Church were simply taken as beyond question and accepted because presented, in the same way exactly as the child accepts without question the teaching of his parents. Even so able a thinker as St. Augustine says of his belief in important matters, "This is my faith because it is the Catholic faith," and in another connection he remarks, "I should not believe the Scriptures unless the authority of the Catholic Church persuaded me." Throughout the earlier Middle Ages reason is often ostentatiously given a secondary position, and on many a point the leaders of thought accept with the greatest avidity those teachings of the Church most difficult to reconcile with logic, giving as their reason "*quia impossibile.*" Thought indeed has its use, but this is neither to criticise the doctrines of the Church nor to come to independent conclusions of its own, but simply to explain the dogma and to demonstrate its truth. Theology and true philosophy are one, — for the good reason that if philosophy does not agree with theology, it is not true. Faith comes first and must precede reason. One does not think in order rationally to believe; one believes in order to know.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that this attitude of subservience to authority was typical of all thinkers throughout the entire period of the Middle Ages. It was indeed characteristic of the great mass of Christians, and authority may truly

be said to have been the great basis of belief right up to the Reformation. But beginning with early times there were occasional tokens of dissatisfaction with the absolute power of authoritative dogma, which, though of little influence at the time, were prophetic of the future. Rare at first, the thinkers who represented this new tendency grew constantly more numerous and more influential and modified imperceptibly even the most orthodox opinion. The authority of the Church had no stronger advocate in the eleventh century than St. Anselm, yet the change is already apparent if we compare him with his great predecessor, Augustine. Anselm, indeed, puts faith before knowledge and reason, yet he no longer believes "*quia impossibile*," and his aim, unlike that of Augustine, is not to formulate, but to justify, the dogmas of Christianity. That a rational justification of faith should be thought necessary was a more significant fact than Anselm may have supposed. The same feeling for the value and importance of reason in matters of dogma is carried still farther in Abelard, who deliberately opposes naïve credulity in religion; and Richard of St. Victor writes: "I have often read that there is but one God, that this God is one as to substance, three as to persons, etc. . . . We frequently hear and read such statements, but I do not remember ever having read how they are proved. There is an abundance of authorities on these questions, but an extreme dearth of arguments, proofs, and reasons. Hence

the problem is to find a firm, immovable, and certain basis on which to erect the system." [1]

One of the first great revolts of reason against authority came in the middle of the thirteenth century, at the court of the Emperor Frederic II, in southern Italy. The spirit of rationalism and cool criticism was in the air, the intellectual life of the court was dominated by the influence of Averroes, the Arab philosopher, and the relative truth and value of the Christian, Jewish, and Mohammedan religions were openly questioned. This whole movement, however, was under the ban of the Church and was confined to a comparative few; the orthodox thinkers and the people at large had not yet come to doubt that, whether or not reason was necessary to support faith, the outcome of the two must be identical. But from the time of the acceptance of Aristotle by the Church an entirely different view of the relation of reason and revelation came into vogue — namely the "doctrine of the twofold truth," the recognition that some things may be true theologically which are not true philosophically. The world of revealed faith and the world of natural reason are two more or less independent spheres. The former of the two is still, of course, the superior, but the recognition of a fundamental difference marked a great step toward the independence and final dominance of reason. The alienation between the

[1] Quoted by Weber, "History of Philosophy," p. 231.

two realms once separated grew more and more pronounced throughout the later Middle Ages, and the attempts made by such men as Albert and Thomas to harmonize them were more than outweighed by the work of Duns Scotus, Occam, and others like them. The cleft between faith and reason was still more deepened when the recognition of the "twofold truth" came to be used by thinkers less devout than Occam and less loyal to the Church, as a cloak for independent investigation; for these less orthodox thinkers maintained implicitly that the truth was not merely "twofold," but *double*, and that the teachings of theology and philosophy were really quite independent and might be even contradictory. This done, authority and reason once squarely set against each other, the victory of the latter over her former mistress was only a question of time. To follow out in detail the struggle between the two would expand this book to most unwieldy dimensions and would be also entirely aside from our present purpose, which is not to give the history of the Christian Church, but merely to point out in a very general way a few typical and instructive cases of Christian belief based on authority. Suffice it to say that one great turning point in the struggle between reason and authority came with the Reformation, when, for a large portion of Christendom, the authority of the Church was overthrown. The conflict, however, by no means ended here, for a new authority — namely, that of a book — was substituted for that of

Pope and council, and so the old war went on. The latest phase of this struggle — the direct attack upon the authority of the Scriptures — will be taken up later in connection with Deism and the Religion of Thought; for in this its last position authority is no longer a matter of primitive credulity but is rather a kind of reasoned belief. Before touching upon this, however, we must consider a phase of Christian belief which considerably antedates it in time, and which, in fact, went almost hand in hand with the scholastic belief from authority. I refer to Christian mysticism, which, though found in every age of Christianity, has many of its most typical examples in the Middle Ages.

II

Mysticism is a word of so many meanings[1] that it bears little significance unless accompanied by a definition. The general drift of our study will, however, suggest the sense in which I intend to use the word. I do not mean by it a doctrine of metaphysical monism, nor telepathy and spiritualism, but rather an epistomological doctrine and the experience on which this is based. Dr. J. R. Illingworth has defined it as "the belief that the human spirit is capable of an immediate apprehension of absolute being or reality; an apprehension, that is to say, which is not inferential, but intuitive; without intermediate stages, and there-

[1] Cf. the twenty-six different uses of the word noted by Inge in the Appendix to his "Christian Mysticism."

fore incapable of explanation, but for the same reason infallibly sure"; or, in theological terms, it is the belief "that the soul is capable of immediate union or communion with God." [1] To put it more briefly, mysticism, as I shall use the term, might be defined as belief in God based chiefly on an immediate experience whose dominant element is feeling. Whether or not such a definition leaves room for all those persons who are sometimes called mystics, every one will recognize that it denotes at least a large and clearly marked region of religious experience.

This is, of course, no place to give anything like an exhaustive account of Christian mysticism, from either an historical or a psychological point of view. I wish merely to point out a few characteristics which every one familiar with the mystics will recognize as extremely common, if not universal, among them. In the first place, then, the mystic makes a deliberate and conscious attempt to get rid of the discursive form of thought and to substitute for it some form of immediate experience which shall be beyond all reasoning. The methods used by some of the mystics were not different in principle from that of the Yogins of India described on pages 103–105.[2] It consists of

[1] "Christian Character," p. 174.

[2] Cf. an article by B. de Montmorand, "Ascetism et Mystique," Revue Philosophique, LVII. 242 ff. See also Rechenbergius's "Exercitationum in N. Testamentum" (Lipsiae, 1707) for an account of the methods of the Quietist monks on Mt. Athos in the

two parts: in the first, by means of ascetic practices the soul is made void of the world and ceases to be distracted by interest in the environment; in the second, thought becomes less active and the whole consciousness is dominated by the emotional intuition of God, reënforced by all the life of the feeling background. The mystic puts himself in a mood of waiting and a state of emptiness for the marginal forces to fill.

Different mystics make use of different methods for reaching the final condition where the discursive thought of the individual shall be replaced by the feeling state, but in principle nearly all substantially agree. The Father of Christian mysticism, Diony-

14th century. Their directions for attaining the mystic state were as follows: "Attendi, ut facias quod Tibi dico: clausis foribus sedeas in uno aliquo angulo seorsim, mentemque tuam abstractas ab omni vanitate, re fragili et caduca. Deinde mentum tuum pectori innexum inhaereat, moveasque sensibilem oculum cum tota mente tua in medio ventris, in umbilicum scilicet; quin etiam constringe attractionem spiritus narium, ut non facile spires; et inquire intus in visceribus, ut reperias locum cordis, ubi animi facultates morari solent. Et primum quidem invenies tenebras et crassitudinem minime cedentem; ubi vero perstiteris, ac dies noctesque in hoc opere consumeris, O rem admirandam! percipies laetitiam, quae nullo puncto temporis intermittit. Quamprimum enim mens locum cordis reperit, statim adspicit, quae numquam sciebat. Siquidem viso aëre, qui inter spatium cordis extat, se ipsa totam lucidam et discernendam praebet." Rechenbergius goes on to say, "Quare recte Umbilicanimi dicti sunt, quod ad umbilicum adpresso capite animam illiusque facultates quaererent, ac invenientes, tum demum lumine implerentur, atque divinam quandam et increatam lucem videre se, ardoremque sancti Spiritus concipere ac per nares efflare, dicerent," pp. 388–389.

sius the Areopagite, has indeed no definite system; but in his directions to Timothy for obtaining the desired condition, the germ, at least, of the later more elaborate methods is to be found. In his "Mystic Theology" he says, "But thou, O dear Timothy, by thy persistent commerce with the mystic visions, leave behind sensible perceptions and intellectual efforts, and all objects of sense and of intelligence, and all things being and not being, and be raised aloft unknowingly to the union, as far as attainable, with Him Who is above every essence and knowledge. For by the resistless and absolute ecstasy in all purity, from thyself and all thou wilt be carried on high to the superessential ray of the divine darkness, when thou hast cast away all and become free from all." [1]

Ascetic practices are used by a large proportion of the mystics in order to deaden all carnal desires and drive out the individual will — even such an unsystematic mystic as St. Francis of Assisi making use of them in preparation for the "divine mysteries." Readers of the "Fioretti" will recall many passages like the following: "And the feast of the Assumption being now come, Saint Francis began the holy fast with great abstinence and severity, mortifying his body and comforting his spirit with fervent prayers, vigils, and scourgings; and in these prayers ever growing from virtue to virtue he made ready

[1] "The Works of Dionysius the Areopagite," translated by Parker, p. 130.

his soul for the divine mysteries and the divine splendors." [1]

Many of the mystics have a definitely formulated and systematic procedure, consisting of several steps and culminating always in the sense of union with the divine. Thus Hugo of St. Victor has five stages, beginning with reading of the Scriptures and thinking on religious subjects, and ending in the ecstatic union with God. St. Teresa, St. François de Sales, St. John of the Cross, and Madame Guyon have similar methods.[2] These, as a rule, start with "meditation" on some sacred subject, all other interests being thus shut out, followed by "contemplation," a more restricted and intense form of experience, in which the consciousness is still further narrowed; and this in turn gives way to an experience from which all discursive thought and all intellectual effort have disappeared.

Those mystics who have no such violent experiences as the Spaniards and French, and who have devised no definite method of attaining the ecstatic condition, still recognize the necessity of giving up all individual reasoning if one would hear God speak in the heart. Dionysius the Areopagite teaches that, as in thinking we must shut out the interruption of the senses, so in seeking the immediate knowledge of God we must shut out thought. "It is during the

[1] "Fioretti," translated by T. W. Arnold, p. 182.

[2] Cf. Leuba's two articles, "Tendances Religieuses chez le Mystiques Chrétiens," in the *Revue Philosophique*, LIV, 1–36 and 441–487, especially 450–455.

cessation of every mental energy that such a union as this of the deified minds toward the superdivine light takes place." [1] "We ought to know that our mind has the power for thought through which it views things intellectual, but that the union through which it is brought into contact with things beyond itself surpasses the nature of the mind. We must then contemplate things Divine after this union, not after ourselves, but by our whole selves, standing out of our whole selves, and becoming wholly of God." [2] Bernard of Clairvaux says great is the philosopher who seeks the eternal by means of thought, but greatest of all is he who, spurning the senses and the intellect, soars by a direct flight to the divine.[3] The sermons of Meister Eckhart are full of exhortations to give up all processes of reasoning, as a necessary step to attaining the higher sort of knowledge. "The emptier your mind, the more susceptible are you to the working of His influence." "Memory, understanding, will, all tend toward diversity and multiplicity of thought, therefore you must leave them all aside, as well as perception, ideation, and everything in which you find yourself or seek yourself. Only then can you experience this new birth — otherwise never." "If you would know God,

[1] "Divine Names," in Parker's translation, p. 8.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[3] "Qui spreto ipso usu rerum et sensuum, . . . non ascensoriis gradibus, sed inopinatis excessibus, avolare interdum contemplando ad illa sublimia consuevit." — "De Consideratione," V, 2.

your own knowledge can serve you not a whit. Do not suppose that your understanding can ever so increase that you can come to know God by means of it; for if God is to shine divinely within your soul no natural light can help in any way. Rather must it sink to an absolute nothing and wholly cease to be. And then can God shine with His own light within you and bring with Him all that you have laid aside and a thousand fold more, including it all within Himself." [1]

The chief rule for gaining this highest stage of mystic knowledge is, therefore, not to try to gain it. You guide yourself toward it best by ceasing to guide yourself at all. Thought and will are only a hindrance. By emptying yourself of all the light of common day, you put yourself in a state in which the heavenly light *may* shine upon you if it will; but you cannot compel it. Those mystics who have the most elaborate methods of inducing the ecstatic condition are the ones who most strongly insist upon its independence of human will and human effort. The first two stages, "meditation" and "contemplation," are indeed in one's power, but the final stage is a divine gift pure and simple. You cannot force it. It is like the wind which bloweth where it listeth — you hear its sound and gratefully feel its breath upon your cheek, but cannot tell whence it comes nor whither it goes. Absolute passivity is the condition

[1] Meister Eckhart's "Mystische Schriften," put into modern German by Gustav Landaur, pp. 20, 33, 34, 35.

receiving it. The repeated assertions of the mystics as to this remind one of the common testimony in conversion cases: "I had to stop trying first." The little will of the conscious and limited individual must simply give up before the deeper will of the larger personality, stretching out from the conscious center no one knows how far, can take control.

The experience thus resulting seems to the mystic different in kind from the ordinary. It is like being lifted suddenly into a fourth dimension. So utterly removed from every other form of experience is it, that it can be described, if at all, only in negative terms or in expressions that seem self-contradictory. Thus Dionysius writes, "The Divine gloom is the unapproachable light in which God is said to dwell. And into this gloom, invisible indeed on account of surpassing brightness, and unapproachable on account of the excess of the superessential stream of light, enters every one deemed worthy to know and to see God, by the very fact of neither seeing nor knowing, really entering into Him who is above vision and knowledge." [1] In truth the experience is simply not to be described. The soul "finds no terms, no means, no comparison whereby to render the sublimity of the wisdom and the delicacy of the spiritual feeling with which she is filled. . . . Accordingly in this knowledge, since the senses and the imagination are not employed, we get neither form nor im-

[1] "Letter to Dorotheus," Parker's translation, p. 144.

pression, nor can we give any account nor furnish any likeness, although the mysterious and sweet-tasting wisdom comes home so clearly to the inmost parts of the soul. Fancy a man seeing a certain kind of thing for the first time in his life. He can understand it, use it, and enjoy it, but he cannot apply a name to it, nor communicate any idea of it, even though all the while it be a mere thing of sense. How much greater will be his powerlessness when it goes beyond the senses! . . . However sublime and learned may be the terms we employ, how utterly vile, insignificant, and improper they are, when we seek to discourse of divine things by their means!" [1] "No life can express it nor tongue so much as name what the fire of the inflaming love of God is." [2] "All the truths which the masters have ever taught with their own reason and their own understanding or which they will teach in the future up to the Last Day, contain not the least particle of this knowledge and of this mystery. If it should be called a not-knowing and an ignorance,[3] it would still include within itself more than all knowledge and all wisdom from without." [4]

[1] Quoted from St. John of the Cross, by Professor James, "Varieties of Religious Experience," pp. 407, 408.

[2] Jacob Behmen, quoted in Bucke's "Cosmic Consciousness."

[3] "Wenn es schon ein Unwissen heiss und eine Unerkanntheit."

[4] Eckhart, *op. cit.*, p. 22. Cf. Lao-tze: "The reason that can be reasoned is not the eternal Reason. The name that can be named is not the eternal name." ("Tao-Teh King," I, 1, translated by Paul Carus.)

In their attempts to describe this experience which they so generally call indescribable, the mystics vary with the longitude. Some have visions, some "locutions," some have trances ending in unconsciousness, while some know of no such intense experience but speak of a calm and quiet ecstasy. St. Teresa speaks of Jesus, St. François de Sales of the Virgin, Suso of the "Eternal Wisdom" in the form of a beautiful maiden. These should be regarded as the excrescences and exaggerations of mysticism and in no way essential to it. The great majority of the mystics neither have nor desire any such visions, but consider them thoroughly abnormal and dangerous; in fact they often speak of them as the delusions of Satan. To take the extreme cases as the typical ones is a mistaken method. But with all their variations, there are two things to which, I believe, all the mystics bear testimony: firstly, the ineffable nature of the experience, already referred to, and secondly, the absolute assurance that in it they have come into conscious connection with a larger life near to or surrounding them and continuous with theirs.

The simplest and commonest example of this, and after all the best and most really typical, is found in every sincere and earnest prayer. Whoever prays not merely with the belief, but with the immediate sense that God is with him and hears, is to that extent a mystic and a mystic of the highest type. This sense of the divine presence sometimes fills the prayerful mind to such an extent as to leave no room for con-

fession or request. In all the annals of Christianity no finer example of mysticism is to be found than St. Francis on his knees in prayer throughout the night, and unable to ask for anything, but simply crying out, "My God, my God!" "St. Francis . . . rose up from his bed and set himself to pray, lifting up his hands and eyes unto heaven, and with exceeding great devotion and fervor said, 'My God, my God!' And thus saying and sorely weeping, he abode till morning, alway repeating, 'My God, my God!' and naught beside." [1]

Examples of this "consciousness of the presence of God" abound throughout the history of mysticism, but I shall quote only a few passages illustrating it from the almost endless number with which the mystical books are filled. "Sometimes," says St. Teresa, "when I was reading I came suddenly upon a sense of the presence of God which did not allow me to doubt that He was within me and that I was entirely engulfed in Him." "Being in prayer on the Festival of the glorious St. Peter, I saw close to me, or rather felt — for I saw nothing with either the eyes of the body or those of the soul — but it seemed to me that Christ was beside me, and I saw that it was He Himself who was speaking to me, at least so it appeared to me." [2]

[1] "Fioretti," p. 4.

[2] Quoted from the "Vie de St. Teresa," by Mrs. Graham, in her "Santa Teresa," pp. 144 and 169.

Madame Guyon describes her experience thus: "My spirit, disenthralled from selfishness, became united with and lost in God, its Sovereign, who attracted it more and more to Himself. And this was so much the case, that I could seem to see and know God only and not myself. . . . It was thus that my soul was lost in God, who communicated to it His qualities, having drawn it out of all that it had of its own. . . . O happy poverty, happy loss, happy nothing, which gives no less than God Himself in His own immensity — no more circumscribed to the limited manner of creation, but always drawing it out of that to plunge it wholly into His divine Essence." [1]

"In this embrace and essential unity with God," writes Ruysbroek, "all devout and inward spirits are one with God by living immersion and melting away into Him; they are by grace one and the same thing with Him, because the same essence is in both." "For what we are, that we intently contemplate; and what we contemplate, that we are; for our mind, our life, and our essence are simply lifted up and united to the very truth, which is God. Wherefore in this simple and intent contemplation we are one life and one spirit with God. . . . In this highest stage the soul is united to God without means; it sinks into the vast darkness of Godhead." [2]

At such times, according to Bernard of Clairvaux,

[1] Quoted by Vaughn, "Hours with the Mystics," Vol. II, p. 228.

[2] Quoted by Inge, "Christian Mysticism," p. 170.

the soul knows itself to be lost in God. "As the little drop of water when poured into a quantity of wine appears to surrender its own nature and takes on both the taste and the color of the wine, . . . and as the air when shot through by the sunbeam is transformed into the brightness of the light, so that it seems not so much to be illuminated as to be the very light itself; so does the human consciousness, in some ineffable way, then flow into the divine and empty itself completely into the will of God." [1]

The reader of Emerson will be reminded by this of the essay on the "Over-Soul." "From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all." "As there is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heavens, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God." "For this communication is an efflux of the Divine Mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life." [2]

The same greater Life Jacob Behmen describes as having slowly grown up within him. "It opened itself to me from time to time as in a young Plant;

[1] Quoted by Preger, "Deutsche Mystik," Vol. I, p. 226.
[2] Works, Vol. II, pp. 270, 271, 281.

though the same was in me for the space of twelve years, and it was as it were breeding." [1]

The "Imitation of Christ" is filled with the same spirit. "For Thou, O Lord God, art above all in all perfection. . . . Thou art most sweet and most abundantly comforting. . . . Therefore, whatever Thou bestowest on me, that is not Thyself; whatever Thou revealest or promisest, while I am not permitted truly to behold and enjoy Thee, is insufficient to fill the boundless desire of my soul, which, stretching beyond all creatures, and even beyond all gifts, can only be satisfied in union with Thy all-perfect spirit." [2]

Tauler makes use of exactly the same figures of speech that we found in Bernard — the drop of water lost in the wine, the light permeating the air — to describe his own experience of union with the enveloping life which he called sometimes God, sometimes the "Ungeschaffener Abgrund," the Uncreated Abyss. The deeps of the human soul lead directly into the divine Deep. "The created abyss leads into the Uncreated Abyss, and the two abysses become a single unit, an unmixed, divine Being. The human spirit loses itself in the Spirit of God, it is plunged in the bottomless Sea." [3]

[1] "Works," English translation, by William Law, p. xv.

[2] Payne's translation, p. 206.

[3] No translation is able to give the music of the original German, which I therefore append: "Der Abgrund der geschaffen ist, führt in dem ungeschaffenen Abgrund, und die zwei Abgründe werden ein einiges Eins, ein lauteres, göttliches Wesen, und da

I have already quoted from Emerson in this connection. To some it may seem strange to find the ultra Unitarian of the nineteenth century in America placed side by side with Teresa and John of the Cross. Yet, though differing so widely in externals, they are all really one at heart. It is the spirit that unifieth; and all the mystics will be found at last to speak the same language. Not one of them but feels that the deepest reality of life is an experience like that to which Emerson refers at the close of his great essay. "Ineffable is the union of man and God in every act of the soul. The simplest person who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable." "The soul gives itself alone, original, and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then is it glad, young, and nimble. It is not wise, but it sees through all things. It is not religious, but it is innocent. It calls the light its own, and feels that the grass grows and the stone falls by a law inferior to, and dependent on, its nature. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow receptive of the great soul, and thereby I do overlook the sun and the stars and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass. More and more

hat sich der Geist in dem Geist Gottes verloren, in dem grundlossen Meer ist er ertrunken." Quoted by Preger, Vol. III, p. 219.

the surges of the everlasting nature enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So come I to live in thoughts and act with energies which are immortal." [1]

Another modern mystic who, though also far removed in many ways from the saints of the Middle Ages, belongs with them in spirit, is Walt Whitman. No one differs from them in outer form much more than he, and yet it is impossible to read his later poems without seeing in them, under many an unusual appellation, repeated references to the same unspeakable presence which Eckhart called the "Stille Wüste" and Tauler the "Ungeschaffener Abgrund." The absence of all theological terminology and the lack of any sort of reliance on priest or church take away none of the strength of his immediate certainty.

"Ah more than any priest, O soul, we too believe in God,
But with the mystery of God we dare not dally.

O soul, thou pleasest me, I thee,
Sailing these seas or on the hills, or waking in the night,
Thoughts, silent thoughts, of Time and Space and Death,
like waters flowing,
Bear me indeed as through the regions infinite,
Whose air I breathe, whose ripples hear, lave me all over,
Bathe me, O God, in thee, mounting to thee,
I and my soul to range in range of thee.

O thou transcendent,
Nameless, the fibre and the breath,

[1] From "The Over-Soul"; Works, Vol. II, pp. 292, 296–297.

Light of the light, shedding forth universes, thou centre of them,
Thou mightier centre of the true, the good, the loving,
Thou moral, spiritual fountain — affection's source — thou reservoir,
(O pensive soul of me — O thirst unsatisfied — waitest not there?
Waitest not haply for us somewhere there the Comrade perfect?)
Thou pulse — thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,
That, circling, move in order, safe, harmonious,
Athwart the shapeless vastnesses of space,
How should I think, how breathe a single breath, how speak, if out of myself,
I could not launch, to those superior universes?

Swiftly I shrivel at the thought of God,
At Nature and its wonders, Time and Space and Death,
But that I, turning, call to thee, O soul, thou actual Me,
And lo, thou gently masterest the orbs,
Thou matest Time, smilest content at Death,
And fillest, swellest full the vastnesses of Space."[1]

"Our lives," says Maeterlinck, "must be spent seeking our God, for God hides; but His artifices, once they be known, seem so simple and smiling! From that moment the merest nothing reveals His presence, and the greatness of our life depends on so little!"[2]

The experiences of the mystic are always taken, and apparently have to be taken, at their face value. They are not data from which one reasons, but ex-

[1] From "Passage to India," "Leaves of Grass," p. 321.
[2] "Le Trésor des Humbles," p. 270.

periences of immediate certainty. Of the more fantastic visions the mystic may indeed have many doubts — witness St. Teresa, who never seems to have fully settled it in her own mind whether certain of her visions were of divine or of diabolical origin. In such cases the mystic may use the pragmatic test and consider the result of the vision upon life. But in the case of the less fantastic and more deep-lying experiences no proof or test is resorted to, for the mystic is absolutely convinced that he has been in communion with his God. In the fifth "Abode" of the Interior Castle, says St. Teresa, "God establishes himself within one's soul in such a way that, when the soul returns to itself, it is impossible for it to doubt that it has been in God and God in it; and this conviction remains so firmly imprinted upon one that if one should go for many years without being raised anew to this blessed state he could still never forget the favor once received, nor doubt of its reality." [1]

"The spiritual life," writes a modern mystic, "justifies itself to those who live it. . . . It is a life whose experiences are proved real to their possessor, because they remain with him when brought closest into contact with the objective realities of life. Dreams cannot stand this test. We wake from them to find they are but dreams. Wanderings of an overwrought brain do not stand this test. These

[1] Œuvres, French translation by Bouix, Vol. III, p. 459.

highest experiences that I have had of God's presence have been rare and brief — flashes of consciousness which have compelled me to exclaim with surprise, God is here! or conditions of exaltation and insight less intense and only gradually passing away. I have severely questioned the worth of these moments. To no soul have I named them, lest I should be building my life and work on mere fantasies of the brain. But I find that after every questioning and test, they stand out to-day as the most real experiences of my life, and experiences which have explained and justified and unified all past experiences and all past growth. Indeed their reality and their far-reaching significance are ever becoming more clear and evident." [1]

To quote from still another modern mystic: "The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone; but the memory of it and the sense of the reality of what it taught has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. I knew that what the vision showed was true. I had attained to a point of view from which I saw that it must be true. That view, that conviction, I may say that consciousness, has never, even during periods of deepest depression, been lost." [2]

To say that after such an experience the mystic is absolutely certain of the existence of God would be an absurd understatement. Even by reasoning

[1] J. Trevor, quoted by Professor James, "Varieties," p. 397.
[2] From Dr. Bucke, in his "Cosmic Consciousness."

alone some people may become perfectly *convinced* of God's *existence*. But to the mystic God becomes the most real and the most immediately known of all beings. "I am as certain as that I live," says Eckhart, "that nothing is so near to me as God. God is nearer to me than I am to myself." [1]

The strength of this certainty can be estimated by no ordinary standard. It is seen best in the transformation and reversal of all the values and conventions of life in the eyes of the mystic. The standards of this world are discredited, and the man *lives* in the light of his mystical experiences. "Such is the sweetness of deep delight of these touches of God," says John Yepes, "that one of them is more than a recompense for all the sufferings of this life, however great their number." One glimpse into the mystic world transforms one's entire *Weltanschauung*. Few indeed, says Tauler, are those who attain to this new vision; but to those who do, however short a time it last, the glimpse approves itself as an eternity. To such as have once gained this vision heaven and earth are as nothing — "ein lauteres Nichts."

III

In the England of the eighteenth century there was little enough mysticism. William Law is the exception which (by a misuse of the proverb) would be said to "prove the rule." It was an age of ration-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

alism, in which every belief must be established by arguments or be ruled out of court. Mysticism and in general all influence of feeling upon belief was out of favor and even an object of contempt in this sane and sober age, as is seen from what the accepted prophet of the time has to say about "enthusiasm." "In all ages," says John Locke, "men in whom melancholy has mixed with devotion, or whose conceit of themselves has raised them into an opinion of a greater familiarity with God, and a nearer admittance to his favor than is afforded to others, have often flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit. . . . This I take to be properly enthusiasm, which though founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rising from the conceits of a warmed or overweening brain, works yet, where it gets a footing, more powerfully on the persuasions and actions of men than either of those two or both together; men being most forwardly obedient to the impulses they receive from themselves." [1]

If on this negative side John Locke was the mouthpiece of his age, on the positive side of his teaching he was no less so. In him both the deists and the orthodox party saw their great champion. Nor was this so strange as it may at first seem; for, opposed as these two parties in many ways were, they joined

[1] "Essay concerning Human Understanding," Bk. IV, Chap. 19.

forces as to the one point for which John Locke in religious matters stood; namely, the use of the reason as the ultimate basis of belief. The eighteenth century in England was the age of the Religion of the Understanding; its two great factions both based their faith on arguments, and differed merely in the choice of the arguments on which that faith should be based.

Nearly all thinkers were agreed that the existence of God could be absolutely demonstrated even without the help of revelation. Thus, Locke tells us that God's existence is "the most obvious truth that reason discovers," and that its evidence is "equal to mathematical certainty."[1] The arguments chiefly relied upon were the cosmological and teleological, though Clarke also made use of the ontological proof in his lectures on the Boyle foundation — a lectureship, by the way, most typical of the times, founded by the great chemist for the purpose of proving the truth of the Christian religion against atheists, deists, heathen, Jews, and Mohammedans.

The cosmological argument is clearly set forth by Locke.[2] He starts with the existence of the finite self and argues that, since it is not eternal and did not create itself, and since "bare nothing" cannot produce anything, there must have been something existent from all eternity, and this something must

[1] "Essay," Bk. IV, Chap. 10.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

have been both intelligent and most powerful in order to have produced intelligent beings. The argument from design is used in greatest detail by Derham in his Boyle lectures of 1711 and 1712, in which the entire universe, from the sun and the earth to the intestinal glands of the smallest animals, is laid under contribution to produce marks of design and contrivance.[1] Nor had the deists any criticisms to make upon these orthodox attempts to demonstrate the existence of God. So obvious to the reason, in fact, did they consider this to be that, as a rule, they quite took it for granted, as not to be doubted by any rational being. That religious faith must be based on reason and on it alone is their oft-reiterated assertion. "We hold," says Toland,[2] "that Reason is the only Foundation of all Certitude." "All Faith now in the world is . . . entirely built upon Ratiocination." Matthew Tindal, the consummation of Deism, in like manner takes the existence of God quite for granted, as demonstrated to the reason of every thinking man, and insists that the truths of Christianity are only the truths of natural reason and hence are as "Old as Creation," and that the Gospel was merely "a republication of the Religion of Nature."

[1] "Physico-Theology, or a Demonstration of the Being and Atrtibutes of God from his Works of Creation."

[2] The title of his book is itself significant: "Christianity not Mysterious, or a Treatise showing that there is Nothing in the Gospel contrary to Reason nor above it." The passages here cited are from pp. 6 and 127.

What divided the two parties of thought was the question of the relative values to be assigned to the arguments from authority and those from revelation. Here, again, Locke, though regarded somewhat suspiciously by some of his contemporaries, came more than any one else to be the spokesman of the age. The argument from divine revelation, according to him, is perfectly valid and must be regarded as absolute proof, but it lies always with the reason to determine what is and what is not such a revelation. If the authoritative passage conflicts with reason, it cannot be accepted; if, on the contrary, though seemingly unlikely it is perfectly possible and rational and is "an evident revelation," it must be admitted. The assertions of the Bible, for instance, being witnessed to by signs and wonders, — such as the burning bush, the rod turned into a serpent, etc., — are sufficiently and conclusively proven to have been of divine authority.

Revelation, then, can never be the sole basis of faith, for in any case reason is the final court of appeal, and a belief based on revelation is therefore no more unreasoned than one based on the testimony of witnesses which one has a perfect right to examine critically. It is merely a question of evidence.

Toland adopts much the same view. There are, according to him, four sources of information: (1) the experience of the senses, (2) the experience of the mind, (3) human authority or revelation, (4) divine

authority or revelation, — one of them being quite as reasonable a basis for belief as another, and faith being "a most firm Persuasion built upon substantial Reasons." [1]

Some of the deists were not so willing to accept the supernatural elements of the Bible as were Locke and Toland, and to crush out this spark of skepticism and to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the reason for all time the absolute trustworthiness of the Scriptures as the basis of a rational faith, Leslie brought forth his "Short and Easy Method with the Deists." "He proposed to lay down a test so simple, unequivocal, and easy of application, that doubt should be henceforth impossible to the candid inquirer. The test proposed . . . was expressed in four rules destined to try the truth of alleged matters of fact. They are expressed as follows: 'First, That the matter of fact be such, as that men's outward senses, their eyes and ears, may be judges of it. Second, That it be done publicly, in the face of the world. Third, That not only public monuments be kept up in honor of it, but some outward actions to be performed. Fourth, That such monuments or such observances be instituted and do commence from the time the matter of fact was done.' The first two rules, he says, make deception impossible at the time; the last two make it impossible at any subsequent period. The application of these tests establishes the truth of the Mosaic records and of the

[1] "Christianity not Mysterious," pp. 16–18 and 132.

Gospels; and establishes equally the falsehood of the Mohammedan religion." [1]

The man who went farthest in his reliance upon the argument from authority was Waterland, who tried to show that Clarke's *a priori* demonstration of God's existence would not hold, and insisted that the historical argument was the only proper one, and that men should accept and be content with whatever was demonstrated to them by divine authority confirmed with miracles.

But spite of Waterland's exegesis and Leslie's short and easy method, there was a growing tendency to use discrimination in acceptance of the supernatural and to put constantly less trust in the argument from authority. Whiston in 1722 published his "Essay toward restoring the true Text of the Old Testament," in which he tried to show that since the time of Christ numerous errors had crept into the Old Testament prophecies, and at the same time attacked the allegorical method of interpretation. Collins, in criticising Whiston's views, showed that if the authority of Christianity was to be based on the fulfillment of prophecy, the allegorical method must be retained and extended, but at the same time pointed out the unsatisfactory nature of such a support. Woolston furiously attacked the miraculous element in the Scripture, insisting on an allegorical interpretation even of the resurrection of Christ;

[1] Leslie Stephen, "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," p. 196.

while Tindal maintained that revelation could add nothing to the teachings of "natural" or rational religion. The most wholesale attack upon the authority of the Bible was made by Morgan, who declared that the entire Old Testament was of purely human origin and that the Jehovah of the Jews was in no way identical with the God of the Christians. But the attack upon the historical argument which was really the most serious and vital, was that made by Middleton, who, not content, as the others had been, with refusing credence to some particular part of the Scripture, opened up the whole question as to whether there really was any such thing as literal inspiration at all, and insisted that the books of the Canon should be subject to the same sort of historical criticism as other writings.[1]

With Middleton Deism came to an end. The deists were not armed with suitable methods of criticism to enable them to place the writings of the Old and New Testament in the true light. But the spirit of Deism — so far as it was a desire to get at the truth about the canonical books, irrespective of authority and of men's opinions — lived on in the students of the textual and higher criticism, and merely changed its field of operations, temporarily, from England to the Continent. As early as 1670 Spinoza, in his "Tractatus Theologico-politicus," had

[1] Beside Locke, Toland, Derham, and Tindal, my authorities for this period are Lechler's "Geschichte der Englischen Deismus," and Stephen's "English Thought in the Eighteenth Century," also Windelband and Falckenberg.

pointed out that Moses could not have been the author of the Pentateuch. This work was the beginning of a truly scientific and critical study of the Scripture, which, by slow but steady progress, in the hands of such men as Vitringa, Astruc, Lowth, Eichhorn, Geddes, Ewald, Graf, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and others, has little by little broken down the traditional view of the literal inspiration of the sacred writings, and step by step has built up a new view of them, as purely human documents which record, not the direct revelations of a great anthropomorphic king, "the high and mighty Ruler of the Universe," but rather the gradual development of a people and of their religion from very lowly beginnings, up to the appearance of Jesus and of Paul. This, of course, was not done without a struggle, and the defenders of the old view resisted every inch of the ground, but the final result was inevitable. In fact, some of the severest wounds which the authority of the Bible suffered were at the hands of its most enthusiastic and headlong defenders. For when in the middle of the last century the upholders of orthodoxy found themselves attacked, not only by the higher critics, but by the natural scientists as well, they deliberately took up their stand upon the assertion that if the theory of evolution was true the Bible was "false," uninspired, and without authority.[1] Spite of the vio-

[1] For a vivid description of this whole contest see the first and last chapters of Andrew D. White's "Warfare of Science with Theology."

lent attacks of the theologians, however, the hypothesis of evolution steadily gained ground, and it soon became evident that the oft-repeated proof of the unscriptural nature of Darwinism was a two-edged sword that cut both ways.[1] If the Bible had itself spoken, it well might have exclaimed, "Save me from my friends and I will look out for my enemies!"

This dangerous and destructive method of defending the authority of the Bible, however, has at length been given up and the leaders of theological thought are often enthusiastic supporters of the evolutionary theory of creation and of the general view of the Scriptures adopted by the higher criticism. The days are forever past when the Bible could be regarded as written by the finger of Jehovah or sent down from Heaven (as the Koran) in sections to certain holy men of old. The doctrine of literal inspiration has been practically (if not in theory) discarded by all but the most conservative. The Bible is seen by nearly all to be one of the most human of books. The advocates of the "New Theology" insist that this change of view is no loss to religion, but a gain. And doubtless this is so; in these critical days a fallacious argument cannot long support a belief,

[1] This is but a typical example of that irony of fate which often makes the unwise defenders of a theological cause its most dangerous, though unwilling, enemies. The attack on Darwinism was not the first case. "It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that the naturalism of to-day is the logical outcome of the natural theology of a century ago." (Ward's "Naturalism and Agnosticism," Vol. I, p. 48.)

and the sooner one recognizes its weakness the better. And yet it cannot be denied that, along with the old view of the authority of the Bible, has gone one of the strongest bases for the popular belief in God. I speak here as if its direct authority had already passed away, because, although a large part of the present generation still clings to it, it has lost all hold on the leaders of thought and is certainly destined before very many years to become one of the curiosities of the past. When one considers the tremendous change in the general attitude toward literal inspiration that has taken place both in this country and in England during the past thirty years, one hesitates to set any limits to the progress which this same tendency may make in the next thirty. The argument for the existence of God from the absolute authority of the Bible was, of course, always exceedingly illogical, and involved a *petitio principii* from the very start; but that did not prevent it from having tremendous weight with the popular mind. Hence, no matter how joyfully one may welcome a more rational view of the Scriptures, one must still recognize the fact that the popular belief in God, in losing the argument from authority, has lost — or at least is destined to lose — one of its strongest bases.

Nor have the other arguments of the Religion of Thought fared so very much better. As the ontological proof never had any influence on religion and belonged only to the philosophic few, not to the

people, I shall not touch upon it here, nor discuss the question whether or not Kant satisfactorily and forever refuted it.[1] But the cosmological and (especially) the teleological arguments have been of considerable importance to religious belief, and their fate must be briefly considered. The form of the cosmological argument which Kant attacked was not the popular, but the scholastic form, and the God it sought to prove was not the popular, but the scholastic God. Nevertheless Kant's reasoning holds of the former as well as of the latter.[2] A typical example of the more popular form of the cosmological proof is that of Locke, to which reference was made a few pages back. That such an argument will not hold in the face of Kant's criticism must be evident to all. In the first place, it never forces one to admit the existence of "Something eternal" at all; for there is nothing contradictory in the concept of an infinite regress of finite beings; there is no one place in the chain rather than another at which we are forced to stop; there is no way of forcing reason into the acceptance of a "Great First Cause," in the sense in which this term is commonly used. But even if we grant that the argument has demonstrated the existence of a necessary Being, an eternal Something, it has by no means led us to the kind of Being that the argument set out to prove, or that reli-

[1] See the "Kritik der reinen Vernunft" (Kirchmann's Edition), pp. 512–519.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 520–532.

gion demands. To assert that this necessary Being — which for all the argument shows may be just the world itself — is "God" in any ordinary sense of that term, is an immense and utterly unwarranted assumption. And conversely, the kind of God that those desire who commonly make use of the popular form of the cosmological argument — a Being who is in the world and a part of it, and who acts upon it in the way of causation — such a Being can never satisfy the argument. For God in this sense is a part of the phenomenal order and therefore requires explanation as much as any other link in the chain. We are no more forced to stop with Him than with any other part — in fact, on the fundamental assumption of the cosmological proof, that every phenomenal being demands an explanation, we are driven beyond and back of Him. If, now, it be asserted that His nature is such that we are forced to stop with Him and to consider Him as containing his own necessity within Himself, this, as Kant shows, can be demonstrated only by recourse to the ontological argument; that is to say, it can be proved only by showing that the concept of God is such as necessarily to imply His existence; and whatever may be said of this latter form of reasoning, certain it is that it can never constitute a basis of popular belief, but must forever remain in the region of philosophy, not of religion.

The influence of the cosmological proof itself, however, has never been very great, and in losing it religious belief has suffered no very serious blow.

But when we come to deal with the teleological proof, we have a much more vital question to face. For, next to the argument from authority, the evidences of design in nature and in history have, as a rule, formed the chief intellectual stay of popular belief.

Kant's refutation of the "physico-theological proof" in its present form [1] is not a direct answer to the popular reasoning, for it was directed against the scholastic, not against the popular and religious concept of God. The argument as commonly used may best be considered under two heads, one of which aims to prove design in nature, the other Providence in history.

The "design argument," as Kant has said, "will always deserve to be treated with respect. It is the oldest, the clearest, and most in conformity with human reason." [2] So obvious is it that it forces itself upon every one's attention; so easily does it adapt itself to minds of different caliber that, as Hume observed, philosophers make use of it to prove the existence of God from the universality of law, and the unphilosophic use it to prove the same thesis by the interruptions of law. Its defenders range from geniuses such as Martineau, through Paley, with his watch and his human anatomy, down to the Rev. Mr. Derham, mentioned a few pages back, who demonstrates divine contrivance and design by the fact that pernicious animals produce fewer young

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 532–539.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 534.

than do useful animals, and by the "prodigeous Bulk" of the Globe ("a work too grand for anything less than a God to make"), and who proves the existence of an All-merciful Designer by means of the mouths of certain birds and insects which are cunningly contrived "to catch, hold, and tear their Prey," and "to pierce and wound Animals and suck their Blood." [1]

For the purposes of this argument the phenomena of nature may be divided into three classes. The first is made up of those objects which, like the eye, seem to lead by a real induction to the hypothesis of an intelligent designer. The parts of the eye, as Mill [2] has pointed out, have one and only one circumstance in common, namely, the property of conducing to sight. This property should, therefore, according to the Principle of Single Agreement, be considered the cause of the eye. But since sight comes subsequent to the formation of the eye, the *idea* of sight in the mind of an intelligent and purposeful Creator must be considered the cause, — unless it can in some other way be accounted for. Unfortunately for the design argument, however, the hypothesis of natural selection has, since Mill's day, won constantly wider and more general acceptance, and no biologist of to-day looks to special divine contrivance as an explanation of the formation of the eye. It may well be, indeed, that natural selection is only God's way of

[1] "Physico-Theology," pp. 170 and 192.

[2] "Three Essays on Religion," pp. 170–172.

doing things, and certainly there is nothing in the evolutionary hypothesis inconsistent with divine creation. And yet, though all this is true, we cannot deny the fact that since 1859 the design argument has suffered a very severe blow. Evolution certainly does not refute design; but we can no longer prove design by appeal to particular facts, such as the form of the eye, which since Darwin's time are perfectly explicable without making use of a supernatural hypothesis.

Teleology, therefore, is forced to take on a more universal form and to retreat to the second of the classes of phenomena referred to, — namely, all those things which seem, in a general way, to resemble the artificial creations of man, and hence to imply contrivance and an intelligent Creator. But, unfortunately, while the resemblance between these things and human productions is sufficient to suggest design, the suggestion is only one of analogy, not of a true induction, and the difference between them and the creations of art is so great that the assumption of a Creator with purposes like ours (if based on this similarity alone) is utterly unwarranted.

The third class of objects referred to is the great mass of phenomena which show no marks of design whatever or which seem, if contrived at all, to be the work of a Power very different from any we should like to claim as a God. These are the facts which somehow fail to be mentioned even in such encyclopædic catalogues of the universe as the books of

Derham and Paley. The suffering of animals and of the innocent, the almost insurmountable evil influences that have surrounded most of the race, are examples of what I mean. This world is certainly a very different place from what one would expect from *a priori* considerations on the hypothesis of a "good God."

"What is this separate Nature so unnatural?
What is this earth to our affections (unloving earth, without
a throb to answer ours,
Cold earth, the place of graves)?"

"Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!"

The upholders of the design argument usually make light of the unwelcome things, or shut their eyes to them altogether, and pick their facts. But the whole of known reality must be faced if we are to take the problem seriously.

But, granting for the moment that the design argument has proved a Designer, what sort of Being is He? If we face all the given facts and try by induction from them to determine His character, can we in any sense be said to have proved the kind of God that religion wants? If we limit ourselves to this one argument, is not Mill's conclusion even too generous? — "a Being of great but limited power, how or by what limited we cannot even conjecture; of

great and perhaps unlimited intelligence, but perhaps also more limited than is his power; who desires and pays some regard to the happiness of his creatures, but who seems to have other motives of action which he cares more for, and who can hardly be supposed to have created the universe for that purpose alone." [1] In Hume's words, by this argument one "is able, perhaps, to assert, or conjecture, that the universe, sometime, arose from something like design; but beyond that position he cannot ascertain one single circumstance." [2]

If I should leave the teleological argument at this point, I should indeed be doing it injustice; for that presentation of it which starts, not from particular acts but from the prevalence of law, the universality of order, is not open to the criticism I have made upon the more popular forms. The existence everywhere of order is certainly one of the most striking characteristics of the universe as we know it and one which strongly suggests that rationality lies very deep in the heart of things. Still I must insist that even this feature of the Cosmos fails to demonstrate anything very definite, and that if we depend entirely upon it, or upon any other empirical argument, we can never reach the kind of God that religion demands.

After what has been said of the argument from

[1] "Three Essays on Religion," p. 194.

[2] "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion," p. 111. Cf. also Spinoza, "Ethic," Bk. I, Appendix.

design in nature, little need be added as to divine purpose in history. Doubtless we may find it there — any amount of it — for he that seeketh findeth, and the "Philosophy of History" may be made to prove anything. But if we should go to history without a theological thesis to support, and merely try to determine by an inductive study what it indicates as to a Guiding Power, we should hardly be led to belief in the kind of God that religion teaches. At most we could only argue to a benevolent but exceedingly limited and constantly baffled Being, or to one who is indeed most powerful but in his purposes most strange, who wills all the circumstances of the great game of life, and aims deliberately at the most atrocious and repulsive events as well as at the noble and sublime. The rain falls on the evil and on the good. One does not have to be old to know that the righteous are often forsaken, while the wicked flourish like a green bay tree. "The blood of the martyrs" is by no means always "the seed of the Church." It is the victors who write the histories — the vanquished leave no testimony as to how in their opinion events should be interpreted. The offerings of those who perished in the sea are not hung up in the temple of Poseidon. Josiah, the devout servant of Jehovah, goes out in the strength of his Lord to fight the Egyptians, and is slain at Megiddo. Rhipeus of Troy seemed to all the justest of men and the most worthy of success; but *dis aliter visum* — "to the gods it seemed otherwise." No more pro-

found words were ever written by the great Roman poet. The cause of justice goes often to the wall. Might repeatedly makes right. The cause which we men to the best of our lights must needs consider the cause of Providence, if there be a Providence, is often crushed. Across every page of history we find written *dis aliter visum.*

It may be that Longfellow's lines are right, that "behind the great Unknown standeth God." It may be merely the fault of our human blindness that we cannot distinguish the true course of the divine plan. Yet certain it is that if we are ever to see that plan or to believe in the God within the shadow, we must get that belief from some other source than an inductive argument from this hurly-burly world of nature and of history. I do not deny that the "eye of faith" may still see, and rightly see, God's finger in the events of the world, nor that the religious heart may still exclaim, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." But it must be remembered that this is possible only after God has been found in some other way than as an *explanation* of the heavens and the firmament.

In short, the point I wish to make is that belief in God as an explanation of things capable of appealing to the popular religious mind, is dying. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the higher criticism and the Darwinian theory have made tremendous inroads upon the faith of the people so far as this is based upon reasoning, and that all the indications

make it seem likely that the changes in popular religious thought which have already taken place, owing to these two influences, are almost insignificant in comparison with those which we shall see in the next few decades. The physical sciences, which have so great an influence over popular thought, have long since ceased to make use of the idea of a God; La Place's reply to Napoleon — "Sire, we have no longer any need of that hypothesis" — is no more regarded as anything unnatural or improper. And at the rate of twentieth century progress, it takes only a few years for the scientific view to become the popular one.

IV

In these last four chapters I have attempted to trace in outline the general course of religious belief from the savage state up to contemporary Christianity. We have seen how belief in the divine was at first based on authority and strengthened by the immediate perceptions of the savage. We have seen this source of faith gradually wane and its place taken by the logical and reasoning faculty. And now we of these latter days have lived to see this second basis of belief beginning in its turn to crumble. And, indeed, the causes of this we cannot deplore; all thoughtful men must certainly rejoice at the spread of education and of logical thought. Yet those who have the interests of religion at heart must read the signs of the times with some concern. We certainly

are passing through a great religious crisis. As said above, belief in God as upheld chiefly by authority is long since dead; the belief as based on reasoning is dying. The authority of the Scriptures in the old and literal sense is almost completely overthrown. Religion is no longer an alternative to natural science in the explanation of the world. The old philosophical arguments for the existence of God received their death blow at the hands of Kant. Whether those proposed since his time and those which are yet to be constructed will enjoy a better fate, it is not my intention to discuss, for in neither case will they in any probability gain any hold upon the people. We are faced with this dilemma: the arguments which the people can grasp are no longer tenable, while the arguments that are tenable — if such there be — the people cannot grasp.

The present situation is one that deserves careful attention from every student of religion. Many who have studied the signs of the times most deeply are convinced that belief in a God, whether true or not, is destined in a comparatively short time to be given up by all but a very few, if indeed it survive at all; that, in short, "The battle of Armageddon has been fought — and lost." [1] And a vast number of keen observers doubtless agree with Matthew Arnold that the sea of faith is now

> "Retreating to the breath
> Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world."

[1] Dr. Osler, "Science and Immortality," p. 24.

Many gods have grown old and died; has not the doomsday of the Christian God come at last? Bishop Callaway tells of the passing of the great god of the Zulus, Unkulunkulu. In their own naïve account, his name "is now like the name of a very old crone, which has not the power to do even a little thing for herself, but sits continually where she sat in the morning till the sun sets. And the children make sport of her, for she cannot catch them and flog them, but only talk with her mouth. Just so is the name of Unkulunkulu." "When the grown people wish to talk privately, it is the regular thing to send the children out to call at the top of their voices for Unkulunkulu." "He is now the means of making sport of children." [1]

Is the great God of Christendom on the road to the same fate? Is He, too, in the future to become a "means of making sport of children"? Is belief in God shriveling into senile decay, and destined to die the death which so many particular beliefs in particular gods have long since died?

Before we can answer this question we must reckon with the field of vital feeling. What is the real basis of religious belief to-day? Is the faith of the people based on arguments or on inner experience? How far has the Religion of Feeling spread in the religious community? It is questions like these that we must consider if we are to gauge the real strength of religious belief. And to a consideration of these questions we shall now turn in the following chapters.

[1] Quoted by Tylor from Callaway's "Religion of the Amazulu," "Primitive Culture," Vol. II, p. 314.

PART III

THE PRESENT STATUS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

CHAPTER VII

DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF DURING CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

In the last four chapters we have considered, by means of typical examples, the development of religious belief in the history of the race. From now on we must fasten our attention on the individual, and more especially, on the individual of our own time and country. How does religious belief originate with him, and what is the course of its development? Why does the child believe in God, and why does the youth continue to believe? These are the questions we must attack in the present chapter. Its scope will, therefore, be limited to the periods of childhood and adolescence, — that is, roughly, up to the individual's twenty-fifth year, — leaving the beliefs of adult life to the following chapter.

I

And to begin at the beginning, why does the child, in the first place, start believing in God? To ask this question is, of course, to answer it. The child believes because he is taught to believe. There are, indeed, rare exceptions to this, and it may well be that, if we had been left entirely to ourselves as children, we should have come of our own motion to some kind

of religious belief. Yet as none of us with our full quota of senses can be so left to ourselves, the statement just made comes nearer to absolute universality than perhaps any other that could be made on a question of religious psychology. A more perfect exemplification of the Religion of Primitive Credulity it would be impossible to find. The young child cannot help believing whatever he is told. For him, to hear is to believe. The world of assertions and the world of truth have not yet parted company, and everything which he sees or hears bears with it necessarily the tingle of reality. Hence we find that the child accepts, as literally as it is possible for him to do, whatever he is told. "In every instance that I have seen," writes one whose extended acquaintance with young children gives her words the weight of authority, "the baby's theology is a more or less perverted rendering of older teaching. Sometimes it is not even perverted and sounds startling and quaint only because it translates into blunt words the ineffable crudeness that in the parents' own theology is veiled by accepted religious phrases." [1] This, of course, is an obvious fact and one that must be noticed by all observers of children. As a rule, they simply translate into their own language whatever has been taught them.[2]

[1] Milicent W. Shinn, "Some Comments on Babies," *Overland Monthly*, 2d Series, XXIII, 11.

[2] Thus two children with whom I am acquainted describe God as living up in heaven and taking care of us all the time, es-

Such translation, however, involves the reaction of the child's mind upon the material furnished him. It is but seldom that the child is capable of appropriating the statements made him by adults without recasting them into a form that shall be for him intelligible. The child must think in his own way or not at all, and the idea must be made concrete, naïve, and usually visual, to have any real existence for him. He does his best to master and accept whatever his parents tell him, but as a rule he succeeds only by mixing up with it a good deal of what seems to us fantastic imagery. To many children "God is a big blue man who pours rain out of big buckets, thumps clouds to make thunder, puts the sun and moon to bed, takes dead people, birds, and even broken dolls up there, distributes babies, and is closely related to Santa Claus."[1] "Lightning is God's turning on the gas quick, or (very common) striking many matches at once. . . . He lights the stars so he can see to go on the sidewalk or into

pecially at night. "He does everything for us and gives us all the good things we have." Mr. Chrisman reports a little girl as saying, "We must work. The Heaven-Man won't like us if we don't work. He knows all we do. We mustn't do naughty tricks. We mustn't make faces at the Heaven-Man. He will spank us; won't he? . . . God is everybody's papa." ("Religious Ideas of a Child," *Child Study Monthly*, III, 518.) These cases are, of course, so typical as to be trite.

[1] G. Stanley Hall, "Child Study: The Basis of Education," *Forum*, XVI, 438. One of my students when a child used to think of God as an old man wearing a purple robe and a purple tam-o'-shanter.

church." [1] Rather more fantastic, though not exceptionally so, is the following communication from a friend of mine: "I remember that between the ages of three and seven I thought of God as a hammer up in the sky, and Jesus (not Christ) as a sort of candy kiss in the shape of two wheels with a bell between like a toy I had. Jesus was rolling around near God high up among the clouds. I am not quite sure whether they had eyes or not, but they were persons. God seemed severe and Jesus mild. I cannot account for the idea of Jesus, but I think the sound of the hammer falling on a nail is enough like the sound of the *g* in God to have aroused the association, for I very often have that kind of association. I never worshiped these symbols or thought of them as very active beings, though I had a slight fear of God. I do not remember how I thought of Christ, but he was not the same to me as Jesus."

One of the attributes of God most striking to children and most often emphasized in their descriptions, is His omniscience. Many children picture God somewhat as John Fiske did when a boy — "a tall, slender man, of aquiline features, wearing spectacles, with a pen in his hand and another behind his ear," and standing at a desk in the sky noting down in a big ledger all the deeds of men.[2] One of the children reported by Mr. Barnes says, "God can

[1] G. Stanley Hall, "The Contents of Children's Minds," *Princeton Review*, N. S., XI, 262, 263.

[2] "The Idea of God," p. 116.

see everything you do and everything you say, even if you are inside a house." Another, "I have thought and been told that He can see through anything; it makes no difference if it is iron, steel, glass, wood, or anything." "Many of the children feel that God is watching them, and some say, 'He writes it all down.'" [1] An illustration of this which is becoming almost classic is the case of the little girl reported by Miss Shinn, who, when told that God was always watching her, exclaimed that she "would *not* be so tagged."

That God should be eternal and never should have had a beginning is the one point in his parents' teaching which the child is inclined to accept *cum grano salis*. That He should be old, very old, is indeed credible; but the child tries to make His age, although great, at least finite. A little friend of mine, aged nine or ten, tells me that "God is awfully old — He must be most a hundred." But that there never was a time when God did not exist, this seems rather too much for a sensible boy to accept. Hence the almost universal question, "Who made God?" Sully tells of a little boy who, "having learnt from his mother that before the world there was only God the Creator, asked 'And before God?' The mother having replied, 'Nothing,' he at once interpreted her answer by saying, 'No; there must have been the place (*i.e.*, the empty space) where God is.' So

[1] Earl Barnes, "Theological Life of a California Child," *Ped. Sem.*, II, 443.

determined is the little mind to get back to the 'before,' and to find something, if only a prepared place." [1]

But the most marked characteristic of God in the child's theology is His power. He *makes* things — that is His great distinction. A boy of three years, ten months, reported by Sully, "on seeing a group of working men returning from their work, asked his astonished mother: 'Mama, is these gods?' 'God,' retorted his mother, 'why?' 'Because,' he went on, 'they make houses and churches, Mama, same as God makes moons and people and ickle dogs.'" [2] One of the California children of Barnes's article, a girl of eleven, says "God can even go through a keyhole, or make himself as small as a pin," and another insists that "He could have an earthquake at *any* time." However, Mr. Barnes adds: "God's activities are seldom described; less than five per cent of the children speak of Him as ruling the universe, making things grow, or caring for our material needs. One boy of ten says in perfect earnestness that 'God is bossing the world.' But the management of the practical things of the world is generally left to the angels." [3]

There is, as I have pointed out, a great deal of childish fantasy mixed up in these early theological ideas; and yet it is obvious that in every case the belief is

[1] "Studies of Childhood," p. 131.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 127
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 443.

really based ultimately on some kind of authority. Most generally it is of course the teaching of parents or of Sunday-school that forms the basis for the child's belief, but these are by no means the only theological authorities for the child. The opinions of one's associates, particularly those ideas seldom taught or deliberately demonstrated but simply taken for granted by the community in which one lives, these are of especial influence on the mind of the child. In fact almost anything that he sees or hears which is in any way relevant to religious questions may be to him authoritative. A Punch and Judy show and the pictures on deviled ham are mentioned by Mr. Barnes as sources coördinate with the hired girl in giving rise to religious conceptions.[1] For the child almost inevitably accepts as true whatever he sees or hears. Absolute trustfulness is his characteristic, and belief is to him both natural and necessary. Doubt is a category as yet almost entirely foreign to him. In short, we may say with President Hall, "In childhood credulity amounts almost to hypnotic suggestibility."[2]

This reliance on authority, of course, does not end with childhood, but it necessarily takes on a different tone in later years. The growing individual wakes up to the fact that there are inconsistent and warring authorities and that it is impossible for him to accept them all. Hence many begin to doubt the reliability

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 448.

[2] "Adolescence," Vol. II, p. 315.

of any and every authority; while many others, owing largely to social pressure and the unconscious influence of those they look up to, choose one source of authority, for instance the Bible, as binding for them, and regard all other sources of ideas as more or less fallible.

II

It is, of course, impossible to say at just what age the period of childish credulity above described comes to an end. It differs with different children. Earl Barnes thinks that the tenth year is generally the turning point, and in this he is probably right. Still, the questioning spirit which finally puts an end to the child's naïve acceptance of what is told him manifests itself in many children long before this. Mr. Brown, of the State Normal School at Worcester, Mass., has made a valuable collection of the sayings of children connected with his school, some of which bear directly upon the point in question. Thus one boy of three, who had apparently been taught that God could do everything, asked his father, "If I'd gone upstairs could God make it that I hadn't?" A boy of five years, eleven months, whose brother had just had a fall on the ice, rushed into the house saying: "Talk about God's being good! I should think He was good — make all this ice and make T. fall down and most kill himself. I should think He was good!" A third boy reported by Mr. Brown, this one between seven and eight, seems to have done

some thinking for himself on the subject of the necessity of prayer. His grandmother had reproved him for neglecting to say his prayers the night before, adding, "God won't take care of you if you do." To which the boy responded, "Well, He did." [1] This last case illustrates one of two leading causes of doubt in the mind of the child. Authority begins to lose its hold over him when he begins to notice that it is contradicted by experience. The boy's line of reasoning in the last example is plain enough. A conflict between authority and experience is not always noticed, but when it is, the authority begins to lose its power. The other important source of doubt in children's minds is a conflict between what they are told about God and the ideas of justice and goodness that have been growing up within them. A little friend of mine, aged ten, said the other day, "Mama, God must have known that Adam and Eve would eat that apple, and they couldn't help doing it if He planned to have them do it. So why did He blame them?" [2]

According to Earl Barnes, the critical spirit culminates with most children between the ages of twelve and fourteen. He bases his conclusions on

[1] H. W. Brown, "Thoughts and Reasonings of Children," *Ped. Sem.*, II, 366, 367.

[2] A question such as this is a significant commentary on Calvinistic theology. How long are we, in the name of religion, to fill our children's minds with the details of an outworn creed against which both their conscience and their common sense revolt?

a study of 1091 compositions of California school children from six to twenty years old. "At eleven and twelve," he says, "there begin to appear in the compositions such phrases as: 'I think,' 'I've been told,' 'My idea was,' 'The Bible says,' 'I was taught in Sunday-school,' or 'They say.' By thirteen or fourteen these phrases become: 'We imagine,' 'I used to believe,' 'I doubt,' etc. A girl of thirteen modifies her statements as follows: 'We cannot exactly tell who is in heaven, but it is supposed that every one that serves Him probably goes there.' And a girl of twelve thus tries to place the responsibility for the statement she offers: '*If* Heaven is a place where you *are said* to be always happy, *I think* it must be very beautiful. One of the most lovely things to beautify a place is flowers. And *it is my* opinion that we shall find lovely flowers there. *It is said* that the people who go there, who are angels, have wings and dress in white. Of course, *I have never seen them, so I do not know exactly* how they look.'

"The most common form of criticism is that which appears in efforts to harmonize theology with experience. Thus one boy says: 'I used to believe that the air was full of bad spirits which would hurt you, but I don't believe it now because they don't hurt.' A girl of fifteen says: 'I don't see how people can stay in heaven forever without nothing to do except to pray and sing, but people might be different there from what they are here.'" Other children reported

by Mr. Barnes insist that they do not believe that savages and babies will go to hell, or that mothers can be very happy in heaven when they see their sons "left among the bad."

According to Mr. Barnes this somewhat skeptical age (twelve to fifteen) is followed by a period of diminished critical activity in religious questions. "One cannot help feeling," he says, "that they [the children just past fifteen] have accepted an abstraction and a name and have, temporarily at least, laid the questions which perplexed them aside. Certainly from fifteen to eighteen there is no such persistent exercise of the critical judgment in matters theological as there is between twelve and fifteen." [1]

That this should be so is, in fact, not surprising. When for the first time reflection begins, the childish ideas which it awakes to find demand immediate overhauling and rectification. After this is done the energy of the child flows into more objective and practical channels, and the skeptical spirit is not prominent again until somewhat maturer years and a new accumulation of experience bring an opportunity for truly philosophical thought.

But before touching on the second period of doubt we must glance at the more constructive work of the reason in the early years. For the child's thought upon his experience, though often resulting in the skeptical attitude just described, still may serve on the whole to strengthen his religious belief. The

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 447.

child makes frequent use of the cosmological argument.[1] Thus, the belief which he gets in the first place from the authority of his parents is very considerably strengthened. *Who made things?* is the child's constant question; and even the prayer which Mr. Chrisman overheard from his five-year-old daughter is typical of the frame of mind of many a child: "Oh, God, who made you? Tell me, God?" The spirit which prompted this prayer is the very Wonder which Plato says is the source of Philosophy. And whether or not the little mind is willing to stop at God, it finds at least all things else leading to Him. To the child God is first of all the Creator, and is useful, not merely as a giver of good things, but as the ultimate answer for most perplexing questions. Says Miss Shinn, "If the very little people are not religious, they are philosophical, for they are usually seized quite early with an immense curiosity about the *causes* of things, and they will follow up a chain of '*whys*' till the answers perforce lead you to the First Cause."[2]

Just how great an influence the child's reason has upon his belief cannot be determined, and, of course, it differs tremendously with different children. There is no doubt, however, that it often strengthens his

[1] This, in fact, is his chief form of reasoning in theological matters, comparatively little attention being paid to the argument from design.

[2] "Some Comments on Babies," *Overland Monthly*, 2d Series, XXIII, 12.

belief materially; and it is even possible that if left entirely to itself the thought of the child might, in some cases, be an independent source of theological ideas — though hardly the basis of a truly religious faith. I add in a note some interesting cases that bear upon this question.[1]

[1] Fannie D. Bergen has given an interesting account of a child whose parents made the attempt to bring him up with no religious instruction. Of course this was practically impossible, yet it is instructive to note the inherent demand of the boy's mind for some *first thing* that should start the others going. Thus, one day when seven or eight he passed a marsh and asked, "Father, where did the first frogs come from?" "From eggs," was the reply. "No, I don't mean those, I mean the very first frogs, — before there were any to lay eggs." Another day he exclaimed, "If I could only find out where the very first sand came from!" The boy seems to have been brought up in an atmosphere of non-religious but scientific thought, and to have picked up many ideas from the conversations of his elders, which he often overheard. When nearly fifteen he had a serious talk with his mother in which he admitted his belief in some power back of life and the whole physical world, and though (owing apparently to what he had heard from his parents) he objected to conceiving this power anthropomorphically, he added, "When you ask me to give you my idea of this power it is very hard to do, for I don't believe, you see, in personifying it. When I try to think of it, there *looms* up before me a great *beneficent*, exalted kind of man. I don't believe in this, and it is very *unfortunate*, but I can't help it, and it may take all of my life to get rid of this notion, which is very foolish, but which I cannot help." (Notes on the "Theological Development of a Child," *Arena*, XIX, 266.)

This tendency seen in so many children to reason back to a first cause is certainly innate, and suggests the question whether or not the reason alone, without any aid from authority or external suggestion, would be enough to bring about belief in a God; whether a child who grew up in complete isolation would have

It must be admitted, however, that the use of the reason during childhood and youth produces doubt

some incipient religious beliefs or would be utterly without any such ideas. Many children, we know, personify objects and causes. (For examples of this see a note in *Mind*, XI, 149–150, by E. M. Stevens, describing his boy's conception of an invisible malicious spirit, "Cocky," and also how the same child personified the sun. Cf. also the "Rainer," in Sully's "Studies of Childhood," p. 454.) This natural personification of objects combined with the tendency to work backward to a first cause would certainly point in the direction of the possible spontaneous origin of religious ideas. Fortunately also we have further and rather more relevant data on this question, namely, the full and trustworthy reports of two individuals who, when children, were cut off from the theological ideas of others as completely as one well can be in an inhabited land. I refer to the two deaf mutes, Mr. Ballard and Mr. D'Estrella. The former indeed never came to any conclusion that satisfied him until he entered the school for the deaf and learned the theology of his teachers, but his restless search for an answer to the question, "How came the world into being?" which he was always asking himself, is certainly significant. It was in his ninth year that this question first arose in his mind. The orderly motion of the heavenly bodies and certain striking meteorological phenomena were among the first things to suggest to him a quasi theological point of view, — as is seen in the following: "I believed the sun and moon to be two round, flat plates of illuminating matter; and for these luminaries I entertained a sort of reverence on account of their power of lighting and heating the earth. I thought from their coming up and going down, traveling across the sky in so regular a manner, that there must be a certain something having power to govern their course." "One day, while we were haying in a field, there was a series of heavy thunder-claps. I asked one of my brothers where they came from. He pointed to the sky and made a zigzag motion with his finger, signifying lightning. I imagined there was a great man somewhere in the blue vault, who made a loud noise with his voice out of it, and each time I felt a thunder-clap I was frightened

much oftener than belief. The doubt of the child is half playful; that of the young man is dreadfully

and looked up at the sky, fearing he was speaking a threatening word." (Reported by Samuel Porter in an article entitled "Is Thought Possible without Language?" in the *Princeton Review* for January, 1881, pp. 104–128.) In this connection it is interesting to read Mr. Ballard's account of his feeling on learning about God from his teachers a few years later. "From the uncertain perplexing round of speculation in which I had been groping back and back through the dark depths of time seeking to discover the origin of the universe, I found myself translated into a world of light wherein my mind was set at rest on this great question; and I felt as though I had become a new being. This revelation of the truth seemed to give a new dignity to everything . . . and it seemed to elevate the world to a higher and more honorable place" (p. 113).

Mr. D'Estrella was rather more successful in his lonely search. Quite early he came to the conclusion that the moon was alive. To satisfy himself completely on this question he made use of four tests, — quite in the spirit of science, — each of which tended to confirm him in his opinion. For years he was afraid of the moon but loved her. She had, in fact, a great influence over his moral life, got somehow associated with his conscience, and helped to turn the tide in favor of righteousness on the night when the great crisis in his moral development came. The sun he considered a ball of fire which some "great and strong man, somehow hiding himself behind the hills," tossed up every morning and caught every evening for his own amusement. "After he began to convince himself about the possible existence of such a mighty God," continues Mr. D'Estrella, speaking of himself in the third person, "he went on with his speculations. He supposed that the God lit the stars for His own use as we do the gas-lights in the street. When there was a wind, he supposed that it was the indication of His passions. A cold gale bespoke His anger, and a cool breeze His happy temper. Why? Because he had sometimes felt the breath bursting out from the mouth of angry people in the act of quarreling or scolding. When there were clouds, he supposed that

earnest. A certain amount of doubt during adolescence seems, in fact, to be normal. More than two-

they came from the big pipe of the God. Why? Because he had often seen, with childish wonder, how the smoke curled from lighted pipes or cigars. . . . When there was a fog, the boy supposed it was His breath in the cold morning; . . . when there was rain, he did not doubt that the God took in much water and spewed it from His big mouth in the form of a shower." (Quoted by Professor James in "Thought before Language," *Phil. Rev.*, I, 615.)

These cases are striking and perhaps exceptional — for it is only fair to add that a number of deaf mutes have declared that prior to their education they had no theological ideas whatever. Another case, however, namely that of one deprived not only of hearing but of sight as well, serves to corroborate the conclusions which one naturally draws from the testimony of Mr. Ballard and Mr. D'Estrella. I refer to Miss Helen Keller. Complete isolation from all theological ideas was indeed in her case — as in Laura Bridgman's — impossible. While still under nine she had been made familiar with the Greek gods through Kingsley's "Greek Heroes," but that from these she got no idea of God is shown by the fact that she never asked the meaning of the word nor made any comment on it till, a little before her ninth birthday, some one tried to tell her about Him. That prior to this she had learned nothing about the subject is made still clearer by the fact that she took this first lesson in theology as a huge joke. Yet several months before this she had asked, "Where did I come from?" and "Where shall I go when I die?" Here again we have the wonder which is the source of philosophy and theology. "As her observation of phenomena became more extensive," adds Mr. Macy, "and her vocabulary richer and more subtle, enabling her to express her own conceptions and ideas clearly, and also to comprehend the thoughts and experiences of others, she became acquainted with the limit of human creative power, and perceived that some power, not human, must have created the earth, the sun, and the thousand natural objects with which she was perfectly familiar. Finally she one day demanded a name for the power the

thirds of Starbuck's respondents had passed through a period of skepticism, and G. Stanley Hall reports that in over seven hundred returns from young men religiously reared and in Protestant colleges there were very few who had not wrestled with serious doubts on religious questions.[1]

As to the age at which doubt culminates, Starbuck's data, for males at least, would seem in part to carry out Barnes's contention that there comes a primary wave at fourteen or fifteen, followed by two or three years of comparative calm. Certainly for many men the great wave of doubt comes at about eighteen, and for many women about two years earlier.[2]

existence of which she had already conceived in her own mind." Just before her tenth birthday "she wrote on her tablet the following list of questions: —

"'I wish to write about things I do not understand. Who made the earth and the seas and everything? What makes the sun hot? Where was I before I came to mother? Why does the earth not fall, it is so very large and heavy? Please tell your little pupil many things when you have much time." (From "The Story of My Life," by Helen Keller, with a "Supplementary Account of Her Education," by John Albert Macy, pp. 368–370.)

If there had been no one to answer these questions, would they have gone unanswered? Or would the child have given herself an entirely positivistic or naturalistic answer? It is possible. But it seems much more probable that the obvious solution for the child would have been the image of a big man who makes things. On the whole, there can be little doubt that, in some cases at least, the reason and imagination, if left entirely to themselves and without external help, would build up a belief in some kind of a God.

[1] "Adolescence," Vol. II, p. 318.

[2] See Starbuck's "Psychology of Religion," Chap. XVIII. Almost no doubts arise after thirty.

The two great causes or occasions for adolescent skepticism are, first, an inherent, almost instinctive, tendency to doubt, a natural rebellion against authority of all kinds, a declaration of independence on the part of the youth; and secondly, and much more important, the reaction of the young reason upon the new facts put before it for the first time. It comes upon the young man with an overwhelming surprise that the beliefs upon which he has been brought up, and which have been inculcated in him as the very surest and most unshakable verities of life, are after all based on such very uncertain foundations and bolstered up by such exceedingly flimsy arguments. For so the newly awakened young man regards these arguments. There is no time in a man's life when his reason is so unflinchingly logical, so careless of consequences, so intolerant of make-believe. His method of reasoning is still immature and is often crude, and in matters of philosophy and religion is especially likely to be so; but it is always honest, always brave and straightforward, always self-confident. Not having yet learned the enormous complexity of the problems that face him and not as yet discouraged by a long list of past errors and mistakes, he has, as at no other time of life, the courage of his conclusions. His delight in his new-found power of thought leads him to attempt to found his religion upon reason alone, and he usually bases his arguments solely upon the facts of natural science. The result is, of course, that he finds the foundation

too frail for the superstructure, and so for a while his religious ideas go crashing down one after another.

This state of things lasts with many up to the very end of adolescence. Some, in fact, continue without any solid religious belief throughout life; but the great majority reach, by the age of thirty, a period of "reconstruction." [1] A few find at last a sufficiently satisfactory basis for their belief in some form of reasoning. Some one of the various arguments — popular or philosophical — for God's existence comes in to settle the question. How seldom this happens, however, is shown by the extreme scarcity of such cases among all the responses published by Starbuck, Leuba, Coe, and Lancaster. Many more (presumably mostly from those whose doubts were constitutional rather than reasoned) return to some kind of authority as their basis. Others, unable to take either of these courses, but weary of the struggle and the tension of doubt, deliberately choose to accept certain comfortable religious doctrines for the sake of their peace of mind. While a very great number find their doubts silenced if not solved for them and the whole question of religion settled by an inner experience that has been growing up unnoticed within them, and which, though calm and unobtrusive, inevitably dominates and determines their belief.

[1] Starbuck's term.

III

This inner experience to which I have just referred — which is, of course, the same phenomenon that in the previous chapters I have called the Religion of Feeling — begins with many people, at least in its cruder forms, quite early in adolescence or even in childhood. Conversion and "spontaneous awakening," which have been so thoroughly studied of late, are the early expressions of it. The average age at which these phenomena appear is given somewhat differently by different investigators,[1] but it is cer-

[1] Luther Gulick gives the following figures, based on the responses of 590 officers of the Y.M.C.A. to the question, "At what age were you first deeply affected by religious influences?"

In childhood (indefinite)	59
At 6	5
At 7	7
At 8	20
At 9	13
At 10	45
At 11	14
At 12	69
At 13	46
At 14	66
At 15	50
At 16	44
At 17	45
At 18	31
At 19	23
At 20	13
At 21	11

(From "Sex and Religion," *Association Outlook*, VII, 50 to 60). The average age of conversion in the 1784 cases collected by Coe,

tainly somewhere between thirteen and seventeen. We must not, however, be content with simply dating the experience as a whole without further analysis, for with different people it is so diverse that it demands further distinctions if our treatment is to be fruitful and illuminating.

In dealing with the Religion of Feeling in India and Israel, we saw that there were, roughly speaking, two types of religious emotion: one a violent and often abnormal kind of excitement, deliberately induced by social influences or well-defined methods; the other a comparatively calm, though often intense, feeling state, which never goes to the abnormal or fantastic extremes seen in the first type, and which comes upon the individual in solitude rather than in the crowd, is dependent not at all upon social pressure, and seems to arise more or less spontaneously, or if cultivated at all is to be sought by means of quiet contemplation. Like many other things in themselves perfectly distinct, these two types run into each other by imperceptible gradations, and may

Starbuck, and others, is given by Coe as 16.4, though in a later work Professor Coe changes his opinion as to the average age and places it at 13.7, this new statement being due in part to Gulick's figures, in part to "a recent study not yet published." (See the "Spiritual Life," Chap. I, and "Education in Religion and Morals," p. 225.) Lancaster, basing his figures on 598 answers, makes no attempt at exactness, but merely states the age of "new religious inclinations" somewhere between twelve and twenty. ("The Psychology and Pedagogy of Adolescence," *Ped. Sem.* V, 95.) Daniels places it a little later. ("The New Life," *Am. Jour. of Psychol.* V, 95.)

even be found together in the same individual — as, for example, in certain Christian mystics. Yet though no hard and fast line can be drawn between the two, they are, as I have said, perfectly distinct.

These two types are clearly exemplified over and over again by the phenomena of religious feeling so often displayed in America — especially in individuals passing through the adolescent period. The first is illustrated, of course, by the revival meeting, where religious excitement is in the air, and a premium is put on feverish feeling. The spirit of the crowd dominates the individual, the powerful influence of unconscious imitation gets control of him, and he yields his old will and his old ideas to a mysterious social force which compels obedience. To say this, however, is by no means necessarily to condemn revivals. Whether or not it is desirable that the spirit of the crowd should dominate the spirit of the individual will depend upon the nature of the two spirits. While it is undeniable that revivals often degenerate into scenes of wild and savage excitement — such as the "jerks" in Kentucky of a hundred years ago or the colored revival meeting of to-day — it is also equally true that they often work for righteousness and result in unmistakable and lasting good. "By their fruits ye shall know them;" and when a man like William T. Stead testifies, as he does,[1] to a complete and permanent revolution wrought

[1] William T. Stead, "The Revival in the West."

by a revival in his own life and in the lives of many men whom he has personally known, it would be absurd to deny that when carried on in a proper way they may be of considerable value. No one can study the psychology of religion at first hand without coming upon more than one case in which lives have been forever rescued from vice and shame and despair by the tremendous power of a revival.

Yet we must not shut our eyes to the other side of the picture. Many a man is led by the excitement of the "inquiry room" and the "mourners' bench" to say and do things of which he is afterward ashamed; and when the intense feeling state of the revival meeting burns itself out, he not merely "backslides," but becomes hardened, suspicious, cynical, toward all religion. The last state of that man is worse than the first.

In fact, just because of its marvelous power when once started in motion, a revival is a most dangerous engine, and is so easily and so frequently misused and turned from the safe track, that one should hesitate long before trying to "get one up." If at times it is powerful for good, it is often equally powerful for evil; and one can never be sure that, once started, it will not rouse the lion and the hydra in man and drag religion down into something approaching a wild orgie of frenzied savages.[1]

[1] I have recently been told by a physician in charge of a large asylum in the South that he not infrequently receives cases of temporary insanity induced by the excitement of a revival. Espe-

Halfway between this crude form of religious feeling and the calmer kind referred to above stand most of the conversion cases which have come about without the influence of revivals or of great social pressure. In most of these cases conversion appears to be a perfectly normal experience. This subject, however, has been so exhaustively treated by others [1] that I shall not consider it further here, but shall return at once to the milder and calmer type of experience.

This, as I have said, often arises spontaneously,[2] and independently of social pressure or even of imitation. It wells up from the more instinctive and vital

cially is this true of the revivals gotten up by the sect which seeks to bring about the "second blessing." One of their revivals succeeded so well that it netted the asylum three cases in one week. Cf. further Davenport, "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals" (*passim*); Moses, "Pathological Aspects of Religions," *Am. Jour. of Rel. Psychol. and Ed., Monograph Supplement* I., Sept. 1906, pp. 47–59; J. G. James, "Religious Revivals; their Ethical Significance." *Internat. Jour. of Ethics*, XVI., 332–340.

[1] I refer to the works of Lancaster, Daniels, Leuba, Starbuck, Coe, Hall, and Gulick. See also James's "Varieties," Chaps. VIII, IX, and X; Ribot, "La Logique des Sentiments," pp. 83–88; and Morton Prince, "The Psychology of Sudden Religious Conversion," *Jour. of Abnormal Psychol.*, I, 42–54.

[2] It is quite likely, as Henry Rutgers Marshall has suggested, that religious feeling of some kind might arise in a child absolutely cut off from all religious instruction. The cases of the two deaf mutes described a few pages back would seem to point in that direction. See also the case of the little girl referred to by Marshall, who, having received no religious instruction so far as her parents or teachers knew, asked, one night, if she might not "say a little prayer." "Instinct and Reason," p. 223, note.

regions of one's nature. It is not gained by contagion or by association with others, but one suddenly finds it; a new feeling of communion with a greater life fills the mind and colors the entire field of consciousness. It may begin in early childhood or even late in life, but as a rule it first manifests itself either in the beginning or at the end of adolescence. Whenever it comes, however, it largely dominates the life, and it almost always comes to stay. It is not a transitory burst of emotion flaring up with fever heat and dying out as suddenly as it is kindled, but a calm, quiet, lasting source of genial, vital warmth, which lights up the whole life and, though often smouldering, is seldom completely extinguished. A more detailed study of its nature will be found in another chapter. Just now we are concerned only with its origin.

It may begin in early childhood. Out of fifteen cases from among my respondents in which I have been able to trace the origin of this calm and spontaneous type of religious feeling, twelve go back to the tenth year or earlier. The following responses are good examples of this class: "There have been times throughout my life, beginning in early childhood, when I have believed myself to come consciously into the presence of God." "I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not know the meaning of God's presence. Very probably I was taught that God was with me always, but I am very sure the experience in question was never described to me. It arose spontaneously and seems to have been as natural as

breathing." One of my friends, who has a marvelous memory and can recall events in the middle of his third year, writes that the experience in question began for him when he was four years old. In most cases, however, it does not arise in any marked degree until the beginning of adolescence.[1] It manifests itself often in a new life given to old beliefs, a new sense for God, a sudden delight in prayer, or in some similar way. The following responses are reported by Lancaster:[2] "At fourteen I became a Christian. I can give no cause of the change. I then seemed to realize for the first time all the truths that had been presented before." "I feel every year greater dependence on a higher power. Religious feeling began to deepen and change at sixteen." "I have had a strong desire to pray since twelve. I never tire of praying, it keeps me close to God. I can do nothing without God." The following responses are chosen almost at random from the many given by Starbuck: "I grew up into the simple, strong, pure faith of my parents. When fifteen I began to think more of God as a personal element in my life, turning to him for comfort." "I had been on the rocks all day — shut off by the tide. I took little thought of time, but all day looked out upon the waves which came rolling up to me and then receded. I was awed by the forces and manifestations before me,

[1] Starbuck makes the average age of "spontaneous awakening" to be 13.7 years for girls and 16.3 for boys. Lancaster puts it at 14.8 for girls and 16 for boys.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 96.

and on that day I came to wonder if it were possible for everything to proceed in so regular a way unless there were a God who had designed it, and who managed it all. All at once there came over me a sudden feeling of insignificance, and a sense of the immensity of the universe, of the existence and omnipresence of God. I fell upon my knees there, and my inmost being seemed to commune with something higher than myself. By this time the tide was down, and I walked back as the sun was setting; life seemed new, I had been lifted up, the field of vision was larger; there was within me a love of mankind, and a determination to bear the burden of others." [1]

The case of one of my respondents is so instructive that I give it at some length. "I think I was just thirteen when one night for a moment there came a feeling of great peace or rest. I almost held my breath, hoping to keep it, but it was gone, and left only the memory, which became an ideal for whose realization I began to hope and work. I called it *peace*, for the verse in Isaiah 26^3 seemed to describe the experience better than any other. I have found some old notes of that year with the verse copied, and think that it perhaps marked the beginning of my search. . . . It may be that it was Miss Havergal's word about 'the permanence of the joy of the

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 200, 201. Cf. also George Sand's sudden religious awakening, so spontaneous in its nature and so lasting and beneficent in its results, described by Sully in a "Girl's Religion," *Longman's Magazine*, XVI, 89–99.

Lord' that gave me the assurance that such a feeling of peace ought to be constant instead of coming in flashes. It came to me only in that last way at first and I could not find a cause that would always produce them, and yet I remember feeling that they must be governed by some law, and if I could only find that law, I could reproduce them at will. . . . One day I found in an old commentary a description of my experience, and it gave me as its cause absolute obedience to God. I had already felt that study of His word and prayer had a great deal to do with the coming of the peace. . . . Gradually, by spending some time alone each day, the experiences became longer and perhaps less intense. They were best expressed by the word *peace*, and I began to know that I might always have the feeling if I would instantly do the right as I saw it and would save time for quiet study. I found that when actual necessity interfered with that, the peace would not go; but carelessness would always drive it away."

Every one will note the marked similarity between this and the descriptions given by a number of the Christian mystics. The experience comes at first unsought and in a sudden flash. This is interpreted in accordance with the religious ideas already held, and is thereafter deliberately sought. Methods for regaining the experience are found in records of the experience of others — in this case an old commentary, in the case of many of the mystics the description of the orison of some previous mystic. The state

is systematically cultivated. In this my quotation is certainly typical of a great number of religious people.

All the sources to which I have access agree that this milder type of religious experience is at first spontaneous, but is thereafter very susceptible to cultivation. It is more often met with in girls than in boys. The average boy is too much taken up with the objective world and with his own activities to give the life of inner feeling much opportunity for development. During periods of doubt, also, religious feeling is apt to be rather dormant — as is often noticeably the case with college students. It is sad to note, moreover, that the image of an angry God which is sometimes held up before children, may in the case of a sensitive child crush out or delay for years the religious confidence and joy which is the child's right. One of my respondents who has entered as deeply as any one I know into the religious experience of which I speak writes as follows: "My first feeling toward God was of terror—an awful fear of resistless power, requiring what was to me impossible, yet regarding me with anger because I did not love him. I thought him infinitely selfish and cruel." Although hers was a nature which, if left to itself, would have been the home of unusually deep religious feeling, the stern theological ideas with which she had been brought up prevented her from knowing what it was until well past twenty — and then it took the death of a favorite brother to reveal it to her.

But while doubt or a harsh, unlovely creed may often dwarf religious feeling, this in its turn when once started is a great reënforcement to belief. This we have seen repeatedly in the history of the race, and we now see it repeated in the history of the individual all through the adolescent period. Nearly all the recent work on the psychology of religion, so far as it is here relevant, bears out this statement.[1] The cold, half-dying belief of the intellect is often warmed into life by getting into touch with the vital forces of the feeling background, and once so vivified and identified with the deepest currents of one's life, is seldom thereafter subject to doubt or assailable by argument.[2] At every turn throughout adolescence we find reason failing the young mind in its attempts

[1] The mental attitude so common in the conversion cases recently studied, and described by Leuba as the "faith state" is an example: "A specific psychic state which is or can be accompanied by certainty as to the reality of intellectual conceptions, religious or other, a certainty not secured by the ordinary processes of the mind when seeking to arrive at scientific truth."

[2] Cf. the theological student reported by Leuba, who had been led by reasoning to doubt the authority of the Fourth Gospel, and with it the whole Christian faith. He describes his experiences thus: "I yielded myself to what I conceived to be the Higher Guidance. . . . At the close of the period I found myself at one with all things. Peace, that was all. . . . Strange to say, the arguments seemed not to enter into my thinking. There was no appropriate faculty and capacity for them in me. They stood apart from me. I could take up the logical standpoint and see that they were quite convincing, and yet my inner peace of belief was in no way disturbed." (*Am. Jour. of Psychol.*, VII, 309–385. Cf. also Leuba's article, "Faith," *Am. Jour. of Rel. Psychol. and Ed.*, May, 1904.)

to gain a satisfactory basis for its faith, and the instinctive forces of the vital background furnishing the only reliable materials for such a foundation.

When the turmoil of the adolescent period is over, the individual, now at his full development, pulls himself together and settles down, as a rule, to some settled and satisfactory form of belief. According to Starbuck this release from doubt and return to some kind of faith is seldom due to any course of reasoning but is determined rather by the instinctive and vital forces of the organism, both psychical and physical. Religious faith is no longer viewed as a set of propositions to be reasoned about, as in the adolescent period, but is seen "from within." Starbuck quotes the following responses as typical:[1] "I learned that religion is not something tacked on to life. From external observance I passed to subjective life and oneness with Spirit." "I came to see that to know God is not a matter of the intellect, but that to live is to know Him."

It is interesting to note that the religious feeling of this "period of reconstruction" and of adult life in general (as we shall see better in the next chapter) is almost always of the calm and lasting type. The excitement of the revival meeting and of the feverish and imitative conversion is seldom found after twenty-five. The feeling which comes in these later years is almost always spontaneous, unforced, natural. It is

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 290.

a thoroughly normal phenomenon, and the condition most favorable for it is *health*, both mental and physical. Starbuck's figures, moreover, go to show that it receives a new impetus at the end of adolescence and continues to grow for many years thereafter; whereas religion as centering in intellectual conceptions as steadily declines. The latter is found, according to Starbuck's data, chiefly among young men between twenty and twenty-four, and with them in constantly diminishing measure as life advances, while with women it is but seldom found at all. The "belief in religion as a life within," on the other hand, is comparatively rare among the young, but when once started has a steady and rapid growth, so that after forty it is one of the most important elements of the religious life.

This ends our examination of the growth of religious belief during childhood and adolescence, and brings us up to the years of maturity. It was important to see how faith arose in the individual, and how it developed in the formative period. An equally important question is why the adult, in full possession at length of all his powers, continues to believe. This question must be attacked in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VIII

TYPES OF BELIEF IN MATURE LIFE [1]

If one will stop to consider carefully the status of religious belief in an average American community, he will, I think, be struck with its real strength and its almost unanimous acceptance. Whenever I hear that oft-repeated question, "Why in these last days are there so many skeptics?" I feel like responding, Why are there so many believers? For as a fact we find our friends and neighbors, of all degrees of education and intellectual ability, almost to a man accepting God as one of the best recognized realities of their world and as simply not to be questioned. That the young and immature should accept as much as they do is perhaps not surprising. But why does the mature adult mind, having altered very considerably the ideas of its childhood, still cling, even down to old age, to a belief in something that it calls divine? And by this question I do not mean to ask what are the *reasons* by which it would seek to justify its belief; but what are the causes, the true bases, on which the belief rests? I know of no question in the Psychology of Religion more fundamental than

[1] This chapter appeared, in somewhat different form, in the *Journal of Religious Psychology and Education,* for March, 1906.

this, and none that has more immediate bearing on the theoretical and practical problems of religious life.

It was to make a start toward the answer to these questions that I prepared the circular on the results of which this chapter is based, a copy of which will be found in the Appendix. My chief aim was to discover, if possible, the relation of argument and of unreasoned experience to popular belief, and more in particular to gain some idea of the prevalence of any real and vital experience interpreted by the subject of it as an immediate knowledge of God — in other words to see roughly how far the "mystic germ," as Professor James calls it, has spread in the religious community. Much is said in religious circles about the "experience of the presence of God"; my object was to discover what in general is meant by that experience, and whether it is confined to a very few or is a fairly common possession.

No one is more keenly alive to the dangers of the questionnaire method than one who has tried it. In the first place, the number of answers that one can by any possibility get is insignificant in the extreme compared with the size of the community from which they are gathered, and in which alone one is interested. The value of these answers depends, therefore, wholly upon their being thoroughly typical — "a fair sample" [1] as the logician would say. And with the questionnaire method fair sampling is for

[1] The expression is that of Mr. Charles Peirce.

several reasons especially difficult. In the first place natural selection brings answers from only one or two types of people. Those who are in any way extreme or unusual are likely to jump at the opportunity to express their views; while the people who are really typical of the community at large — just the ones, that is, whose answers would be especially valuable — often think it not worth their while to answer, since they have nothing unusual or especially interesting to record. The interest and the value of a response often stand in inverse ratio. Moreover, even when truly typical persons do answer, their expressions as written often represent merely the mood that happened to be uppermost at the hour of writing, or depend on the chance presence in the mind of certain ideas at that particular time. Lastly, the mere fact that a question is presented, tends to put the mind in a theoretical and unusual state, and thereby very considerably to influence the answer. While all these things are true, however, I do not think they destroy the value of the method if used with great care. The first danger — namely, the tendency of natural selection to bring in answers chiefly from extremists — I have tried to avoid by letting natural selection have as little as possible to do with it. My endeavor was to distribute the greater part of my questions among truly typical religious people (so far as one can judge of "typical religious people") and a large proportion of my responses come from persons whom I know personally to be (to all appear-

ance) "fair samples" of the religious community. I have also carefully weeded out from the answers several that obviously came from religious freaks. The second and third difficulties pointed out above of course cannot be fully obviated; yet I believe that their evil effects have been largely avoided by the fact that in my treatment of the responses I have throughout refused to take the answers at their face value, but have interpreted each paper as a whole. Some of the questions were put in purely with this in view, — namely, numbers 1, 7, 8, and 10, — while nearly all, as will be seen, bear upon one general question. In a number of cases also I have called upon the respondents and talked over their answers with them; or when this was impossible, have sometimes written for further light on particular points. I sent out five hundred and fifty copies and received eighty-three answers. My respondents are divisible roughly into two classes; (1) those whom I believe I may rightly call typical "church people"; and (2) a somewhat motley collection of intellectual people, professors, graduate students, a few members of the Society for Psychical Research, etc. Whether these latter form a really fair sample of the intellectual community of America I am not certain. Of my eighty-three responses, fifty-seven come from class (1), twenty-six from class (2). Three of my respondents did not believe in any sort of God, two were obviously "freaks," and one response could not be safely interpreted. This

leaves, therefore, seventy-seven cases for our use.

Anything like definite statistics from so small a number of cases would, of course, be valueless; but I do think it will be of considerable value for the purpose of our investigation to treat my cases as types of the religious consciousness, — as "straws," so to speak, — and as indicating in a general way the nature and the strength of the belief in God as it exists to-day in the Protestant communities of the eastern part of our country. If the cases be thus viewed in relation to our problem of the basis of religious belief, they fall into three classes, which I shall now consider in some detail.

I

The first class is made up of those who may be said to believe in God from authority (in the first sense of the word) or from habit and inertia. The belief of these people might almost be classed as primitive credulity and is certainly strongly tinged with it. They believe because when children they were taught so to do, and having formed the mental habit, they would find it difficult and unpleasant to make a change. Inertia plays a large part in belief of all kinds. Once started in a given direction, it is for many people hard to stop or to change the direction — especially in that class of minds not given to speculation and independent thought. "As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." The early lessons of

childhood retain some influence with all of us, and with a large number of people their importance is immense. There are a great many intelligent people who believe because they always have believed. Others retain their faith because it is the easiest thing to do — skepticism and atheism require rather too much energy and time from a busy man. The following is typical: "Entirely a matter of training. I was brought up in the Presbyterian Church — took pride in being an atheist all through my college course — though always attended church and Sunday-school. When I got into life other questions crowded this one into the background, where it has hovered, unsolved, ever since. So far as I have come to any conclusion at all it is this: that if there isn't a God there *ought* to be, and I'll act accordingly." With all his theoretical skepticism this same man in answer to question 5 says, "I think I may say He is a very real Person to me." The exigencies of a life given up to scientific research have prevented him from ever getting to the end of his thought on religious questions, so he easily and naturally falls back on the habit of childhood, with the remark, "My religion is a bundle of inconsistencies which I have long ago quit trying to reconcile." I think this to be a fairly common experience. There are doubtless a great many people who simply take God for granted without further thought; they believe because they do not disbelieve. This same influence of habit is seen even more often among a large number of those whom

I have called "church people." Typical among them are such expressions as the following: —

"My belief in God is from the authority of the Bible and from parental instruction in youth." "I believe in personal immortality because I have been taught it." Another writes: "God, as I have been taught from youth up by parents and publicly, is a spirit, infinite in all his counsels. . . . This knowledge of God thus taught to me by others, added to what I have gleaned from the study of the Word of God, has gradually crystallized into a belief, how I cannot tell."

In this class belong a large proportion of the unthinking — both Catholic and Protestant — who swallow their creed as they swallow their pills. Those indeed who reason about the validity of their authority — be it Church or Book — belong not here but in our next class; yet there are millions who, possibly after a slight adolescent struggle, have allowed themselves to slip back into the unquestioning acceptance of whatever is taught by their chosen authority.

In this connection it will be of interest to consider the answers to question 9, which had to do with the authority of the Bible. The 73 answers to this question were divided into two almost equal parts, 34 accepting the authority of the Bible and 39 rejecting it. As was to be expected, nearly all those whom I have described as belonging to the "intellectual" rather than to the "church" class were among those who answered No to my question, only

2 out of 23 recognizing the Bible's authority. Of the 50 answers from church people 32 accepted and 18 rejected the book's authority, 22 saying that their religious faith and their religious life were based on it. That is, almost exactly half of the "typical religious people" who answered my question feel that their belief and their religion are dependent on the old way of viewing the Bible, the other half feeling independent for their religious life from its authority, or rejecting it (in the old sense) altogether. To the question, "How would your belief in God and your life toward him and your fellow-men be affected by loss of faith in the *authority* of the Bible?" a few responses were received like the following: "It would take away the foundation through which I was led to believe in God." "I would as soon give up faith in God Himself as in the authority of the Bible." "I think I should be utterly miserable and unable to accomplish any good thing." But in most cases no such serious results are imagined, the following being typical: "It would not affect my faith in God, but would greatly lessen my comfort." "I believe I would still cling to my faith." "My belief in God would not be affected." The position of those who no longer accept the authority of the Bible is fairly well exemplified by the following: "There is much for me in its teachings, but I feel it is a rather second-hand statement of what I feel in my own experience." The results of question 9, if the responses are fair samples, would seem to indicate that, while

a good proportion of the community still cling to the authority of the Scriptures, they are gradually giving it up with increased intelligence and study, and would be able to give it up altogether without any very serious injury to their religious faith.

The leading characteristic of this first type of belief is, as I have said, its strong tinge of primitive credulity. But I need hardly point out that it still differs greatly from the simple faith, the almost hypnotic suggestibility, of childhood. The naïve adult mind which still clings to authority from the force of habit does not cling to any and every authority; and though the choice of authority is usually quite a matter of chance, there is still a new quasi-rational element in this belief not to be found in that of the child, and which causes our first type to pass by imperceptible gradations into the second.

II

Our second type of religious belief rests explicitly on some sort of argument — good, bad, or indifferent. These arguments are of various sorts. One large class of them may be set down as belief from authority — in the second sense of that word as I have used it. The authority is accepted in the same way that the word of any scientific expert is accepted — one does not believe it merely from habit, but because it seems the wise thing to do. I have a Roman Catholic friend — a college graduate — who puts the matter thus: "If I am sick, I go to a doctor, for it is his busi-

ness to know about medicine and the body; if I want to learn Latin, I go to a Latin teacher, for he has studied and knows. In like manner, if I want to know about God, I go to the Church as represented by some priest — for I have no time to investigate these matters myself and the priest has, and the Church is the authority in things religious just as the physician and the teacher are in their departments." This is doubtless the attitude of thousands, both Catholic and Protestant. Nine tenths of our "facts" we accept on faith — why not our religious facts as well? especially since so many others have done so for so many years and with such good results. This, it will be noticed, is by no means any longer an unreasoned belief, and it differs from the more confessedly argumentative type chiefly in the choice of the particular facts on which the reasoning shall be based. Of course such an argument often goes in a circle; but this is unnoticed, as, for instance, in the following: "I believe in God from authority, as contained in the Bible in passages declaring himself as God, as 'I am God, and there is none else; I am God and there is none like me;' there are many other assurances that might be quoted." Many thoughtful persons, however, who would see as quickly as any one the inconsistency of such reasoning, still cling to authority, but in a different sense. They may have given up the literal inspiration of the Bible, but still retain their confidence in the authority of certain prophetic persons, especially of Jesus. One

woman writes: "More than on anything else I believe my belief rests on the strong and unreasoned assertions of Jesus Christ. But His assertions do not stand out as isolated facts. I find them coming as the culmination of what may well be called revelations of God through human life." Another respondent names as his authority, "the whole tradition of religious people to which something in me makes admiring response." Another, after tracing the origin of his belief in childhood to the authority of parents, teachers, the Bible, etc., continues thus: "By this time, however, argument was undoubtedly playing its part in giving me grounds of belief in God. My mind searched more or less the grounds of authority, whether of parents, Bible, Christ, or commanding figures in the history of religion. Did they have the right to speak? Did their lives give evidence that what they spoke was true? I think this has been one of the strongest lines of evidence in building up my present faith. I could not and cannot account satisfactorily for the lives of 'men of God,' nor even of some at least of religious institutions, without the assumption that there was a reality represented by their faith and word, however imperfectly."

The more extremely rationalistic members of this second class whose religious belief is explicitly based chiefly on reasoning often disparage all forms of religious feeling and all reliance upon it. One man says: "I believe in God as an intellectual and moral necessity. Any feelings which I may have in the matter

grow out of the perception of the realities which create these necessities. . . . God is a reality to me as a rational being. Any experiences which I may have had which were accompanied by 'feeling' I have explained as above, and this, it seems to me, forms a rational basis for the explanation of all such phenomena in others." The reasons given are various; sometimes the order and design in nature are mentioned, sometimes the progress of the race. One says, "I believe in God because I cannot conceive of a world like ours except as made and controlled by a Person." Another writes, "The modern demonstration of telepathy has helped me greatly." An example of the queer twists that get into some minds who consider their faith founded on rational grounds is seen in the following answer: "Reasons for the belief in God (1) The argument of my belief is that I have it as a gift from Him."[1] In striking contrast to this is the following: "Defining God as the Supernatural of Answer to question 2, I think I believe in Him for the following reasons: (1) I find in everyday experiences that there are impulses, attitudes, valuations, made by myself and other people, which seem entirely unjustifiable by any experiences we have of things and courses of events in the world about us. The chiefest example is the way otherwise rational people act *altruistically* while every dictate

[1] This is not one of the answers I have put in Class 1. The whole paper indicates that the man's real basis for belief is authority, but he *thinks* it is reasoning.

of reason would seem to compel them to act with an *ultimate selfish end.* — (2) More intimately, I seem to have quite frequently a strong feeling of the *goodness* of certain courses of action, states of mind, etc., apart from any good this may do me, or anybody else. These feelings of goodness *seem* somehow to be *very valid* and to carry their own credentials so that they disarm doubt." The old argument to a "Great First Cause" is not once mentioned. Of my 77 cases 22 belong here.

III

The third type of religious belief according to my classification if it must be labeled at all may, perhaps, best be referred to by the term used in Chapter II — "emotional belief." It includes all those persons whose faith springs from a demand or desire or from a more or less vague, intuitive, affective experience. This third class is so large that we can best deal with it by distinguishing those cases which rest upon an explicit demand or wish from those which depend upon what seems to be a touch of mysticism.

The first of these two divisions is, then, characterized by the "will to believe." One man writes he believes, not because he has experienced God's presence, "but rather because I need it so that it 'must' be true." Another believes "chiefly because God is the only hope of the universe. Take away this belief and our existence is hopeless." "I believe in God especially for moral reasons. Things seem to me senseless and

dead if He does not exist and if I cannot believe He helps me on the way." One of the most explicit is the following: "Because I personally want to believe in Him. . . . I pray because I like to. . . . I believe in immortality because I like to." Doubtless a great many people belong to this class without knowing it. They think it is the authority of the Bible or some argument on which their faith is based, whereas it really is the picture of the fear and despair that would follow the loss of faith that makes them cling to it. An analysis of the arguments used in many sermons whose aim is to defend orthodox doctrines would point to the same conclusion; the question discussed seems often to be, not What is true? but What is pleasant to believe? The pragmatic appeal is constantly made; the old doctrine brings happiness, therefore let us cling to it. One respondent writes that, after several years of skepticism and argument, and of keeping his nerves "on a constant and useless strain," he had to come back "to the plain, solid ideas which were drilled into us in childhood. Then comes a peace of mind regarding our religious status. We have seen the practical application. We have seen men die as Christians and others as infidels. We are awakened from our dreams of youth."

But the great majority of this third type of believers is made up of those whose faith is dominated and controlled by a touch of mysticism. This is present in a variety of stages which range from vague cases

somewhat conventionally expressed up to experiences of a very intense sort; but all those in whom this "mystic germ" — or flower or fruit — is to be found agree in basing their belief in God on some experience which they interpret as an immediate knowledge of Him. Typical expressions are the following: "I believe in God because I am aware of Him. I cannot conceive of any argument on the existence of God that would not be blinding and confusing. Watching the effect of such arguments on others confirms my thought." "I believe in God principally because I have experienced His presence; if at times my belief grows weak, the memory of such experiences helps me." "Authority and argument are practically without significance as factors determining my belief; immediate experience of Him as an ever present reality is my main basis for recognizing His existence." "My belief in God rests primarily, I think, upon experiences reaching back into childhood. . . . I have never seriously doubted the existence of God. If I ever had done so, I think I should have fallen back upon my own consciousness of Him at certain times of my life as evidence that I could not doubt."

My results indicate that these quasi-mystics form a very large class, 40 out of 77 respondents belonging to it, while 16 more claim to have had the experience referred to, though in their case it does not seem to be the principal foundation of belief. These figures are certainly significant. That 56 people out of 77

should believe firmly that they have been in immediate communion with God is a striking fact. Moreover, this is admittedly the religious experience *par excellence;* here we are at the very heart of religion. It is therefore a burning problem for religious psychology to discover if possible just what these people mean by "communion with God." What sort of an experience is it? How does God *feel?* Almost my whole questionnaire was directly or indirectly aimed at collecting data that should bear on this problem, while question 5 was written especially for that purpose. The importance of the phenomenon will necessitate a more detailed study of the responses than I have given in the case of any of the preceding types.

There is no sharp and fast line between those who have been "conscious of God's presence" and those who have not. The experience shades down through all degrees of intensity, and the interpretation one shall put upon it depends largely on one's general religious notions. There are people absolutely devoid of any experience like that referred to. On the other hand, the number of those who have had at least flashes of some faint form of mystical experience is probably considerably larger than is generally believed. Many of those who are utterly ignorant of what is meant by "communion with God" have a dim unreasoned and untaught feeling for a beyond that is really a faint approach toward the more typically religious experience. One of my

respondents, for instance, whom I have classed as having no sense of God's presence, tells me that though he dislikes all exact definitions of God and has in vain tried to pray, he has in the background of his consciousness a dim sense of God. In its elusory, vague nature it is like a tune that keeps going in the back of one's mind and which, though always present, one can never grasp or define or analyze. His sense of God is no less faint and elusive. And yet he feels that if it should vanish there would be a great hush, a great void in his life. Especially in times of moral crisis he feels it, as a sense of an unknown something backing him up. And although devoid of *Gottesbewusstsein* in the directer and stronger sense, he adds: "There is *something* in me which makes *response* when I hear utterances from that quarter made by others. I recognize the deeper voice. Something tells me, Thither lies truth."

One of the vaguest forms of experience which is interpreted by those who have it as the consciousness of God's presence is scarcely distinguishable from æsthetic emotion aroused by the beauties of nature, and coupled with the thought of God which is already in the mind. "His presence," writes one respondent, "I find in the deeps of nature and of human nature. I never feel so devotional as when in a great wood where I cannot see out, on the sea, on the seashore, or out at night, under the stars." Another writes, "Yes, in one sense He is real. When I see the sunlight shining through the leaves of the forest trees and

lighting up the ferns and flowers unseen by any one else save myself, I have felt a nearness of God that I have never felt under the influence of any sermon." In such a case it is, of course, the belief that one happens to hold which turns what would otherwise be merely æsthetic pleasure into what is interpreted as a religious experience. It must be noted, however, that the emotion as actually felt *is* a religious one and is decidedly different from mere æsthetic delight in nature, and, whatever its cause, it often assumes great significance and authority in the life and belief of the individual.

An evanescent form of what might be called vague cosmic emotion would also belong here, — as for instance the following: "I do not like the masculine pronoun in speaking of the Divine Energy; consequently have not experienced *His* presence, but have felt a thrill of unspeakable joy and pleasure, as the thoughts of the Higher Life have come to me. . . . I will say in addition that *Something* comes to me, as a great mental stimulus and spiritual uplift." "On certain rare days," says another, "and under circumstances that I cannot analyze, but of which essentials are to be at peace with others and with myself, and being in the presence of some aspect of *nature*, there falls upon me all of a sudden an extraordinary feeling of sympathy with nature. I have felt it by looking out of the window, in the evening, by hearing the wind in the trees, when lying on the grass, by admiring a sunset, contemplating mountain

scenery. Then it seems that things have a sort of language of their own and that they speak of peaceful joy. . . . Then the soul leaps — where? I do not know. How? I cannot tell. But we feel as if we were lifted above ourselves into a new world, and we would so much like not to have to fall back on the trivial earth in a moment. These experiences can never last more than a minute or two. It can hardly be called a sense of presence, because there is not necessarily a prayer, or of communion with God, but as it were the insight into a grander world."

The experience of the divine presence comes to many people in more definite form in times of great trouble. The emotional life is then already most intense, the sense of loss and despair is almost crushing, the will demands help but cannot find it. At such a time the idea of a "Divine Helper" in whom one has been taught to believe forces its way out of the background of consciousness, dominates the thought, and forms a center round which the varied emotional elements crystallize. The whole organism is roused to intense excitement, consciousness seems to be more susceptible to slight influences from the subconscious or unconscious regions, and the deepest vital needs of the whole personality, ordinarily half dormant in the fringe region, take control. It is at such times in particular that the sense of an invisible presence comes. One woman writes, "God as my Father is *very real*. Have I experienced His presence? Yes, and more than once. The most vivid

and never to be forgotten was the strength, peace, and quietness that came as we watched the outgoing of our first little boy." "I do feel that I have experienced His presence very distinctly many times. . . . When praying for the life of very sick children, the voice came, What if it be My will to take them? Through His help I was enabled to say, Thy will be done. He took them, but not only helped me to bear my burden, but gave me a bright revelation of Himself." Another woman writes of her experience when nursing her sick husband in a foreign land. He had been taken suddenly and very dangerously ill, and no one was near to whom she could speak. "The anguish was mortal at times, but God seemed so tangibly near I never felt less alone. I struggled with all my might to save him and to see and do the best thing, but nothing was ever more real to me than that God was the strength of my life. 'A very present help in trouble,' I used to say over and over. It seemed as if He and I were alone in the universe." Another writes: "I shall never forget the feeling of the presence of God with me on that night when all alone in a stranger's house on the hill I worked over my precious child, realizing as I worked that I could not save his life and that nothing could. I could almost hear the words, 'When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee' — and in the dreadful loneliness and anxiety and grief there came a wonderful peace and a feeling of God's presence that I am very certain of."

A not uncommon but striking form of this experi-

ence is the sudden conversion, of which so many cases are reported by Leuba, Starbuck, and James. Habits of years' standing are overthrown in as many moments and not only the man's evaluations of objects and his general outlook upon the world, but his very organic impulses and desires, are so utterly transformed that he can scarcely recognize himself and must needs consider such a momentous change the work of a power not himself. One of my respondents who is now a city missionary on the East Side in New York writes: "I came to Him a dying drunkard and he gave me repentance. I cried to Him and He saved me instantly. I have never wanted a drink nor sworn an oath nor stolen a cent since."

An instance much less striking but of the same general nature was told me by another of my respondents. Though he had always lived a respectable and moral life and frequently attended church for his wife's sake, he had never taken any interest in religion and had no notion of what was meant by a religious experience. One day his wife asked him to teach a class of boys in the Sunday-school, and he of course refused. The next Sunday he was at the post-office just before the Sunday-school opened, and suddenly felt an irresistible impulse to go to the church and take the class. His words are, "If a rope had been round my waist and twenty men at the other end pulling me toward the church, the impelling force would not have been stronger." He taught the class for six months, but with no special religious

interest. At the end of that time his wife persuaded him one evening to go with her to "preparatory lecture." He went merely to please her and paid no attention to what was said by the speaker. But during the course of the meeting he began to feel that he must make a change in his life then and there, and that he must get up and declare his purpose before the end of the meeting or he should die in his seat. He rose and did so, and a new experience began for him from that hour. Ever since then he has had the constant feeling that he is "never alone," but is being guided by a power that is not himself. What this power is he does not know, but he interprets it as the Holy Spirit. He cannot conceive of anything that could shake his faith, so unquestionable is the experience. It does not come in waves, but is constant; a feeling of joy and peace, but best expressed by saying that he is never alone. The *otherness* of the experience seems to be its chief characteristic.

The influence of the subconscious in this case is obvious. The thought of teaching the class and the feeling of duty connected with it, which he resolutely put out of his mind, had been working throughout the week in the subliminal region, and when the arrival of the hour for Sunday-school suggested the thought of the class, the feeling of obligation, made intense by the week's subconscious gestation, forced itself upon him with a strength not to be resisted, and in a way that suggested an external power. The same subconscious working was evidently influential

in his final conversion. The necessary influence of these experiences upon his belief is obvious.

The descriptions thus far given have been somewhat indefinite as to the nature of the experience in question. Nothing seems to be harder for the average person than to put himself into the psychological attitude, or even to conceive what that attitude is. Nearly all write as if "communion with God" were a universal experience and needed no further description. I have had, however, a few definite statements and a number which, though rather indefinite, still help one to make out what is meant by the phrase in question. It must be remembered, however, that we are dealing here with an experience which all those who have had it agree in describing as indescribable; and if such a virtuoso at introspection as St. Teresa had to despair of putting into words the nature of this experience, we must not expect too much of my respondents.

One of my questions was: "How does it" (the "communion" experience) "affect you physically?" This was simply ignored by the majority, while many of the others insisted that there was no physical effect whatever. The chief reason for these answers is, of course, lack of introspective power; though there seems also to be at least one other, namely, that hinted at in the following somewhat naïve expression, "When I try to describe such an experience in words, the terms are terms of sensation and they should not be."

The following response describes at least the influence of physical conditions on the experience in question: "I have been conscious of God in different sorts of physical and mental conditions, although most strongly so when my condition was in every way normal. When I feel well and think clearly, I am most confident of the divine life. When I have been specially conscious of physical weakness with a headache or other insistent pain and when I have been bent on some purpose morally inconsistent, I think I have been least conscious of God." In addition to this I have two definite answers which will help to show us, in the case of two individuals at least, how God *feels*. "When I experience the presence of God . . . I feel, physically, aggressive but self-poised, exhilarated but not impulsive, my chest swells, my breathing is deep and satisfying, and I seem to see the way to action opened up and the strength to do it." "With me the physical effects begin usually with a quivering and upheaving of the diaphragm which starts a wave of sensation upward through the chest region and into the pharynx, and results in incipient yawning. This in turn is followed by an excitement of the lachrymal glands and tears sometimes fill my eyes. All these physical sensations, considered merely as such, are mildly pleasing. After they are over comes a sense of great refreshment."

The "mental effects," as might be expected, are much more generally described — perhaps it would be more exact to say that the descriptions are more

often given in conceptual than in sensational terms. The sense of God's presence, apprehended with something of the certainty of a visible presence, is frequently the only thing mentioned in the experience.[1] "God is very real to me in the experience of His presence. I talk with Him and He talks with me. He is my companion. When our fellowship is undisturbed, He controls my thoughts and likewise my body." "Yes, I have experienced His presence, but not so vividly since childhood. I remember, very distinctly, when I had been harshly if not unjustly treated, and sent to bed, feeling His arms about me, so that I would even be glad to finish my prayers to feel my Heavenly Father comfort me. Since I have been a woman grown it has been only a sense of some one with me, correcting, reminding, or comforting." "As a child of seven I remember the emotion that filled me one evening at the sight of the evening star in a clear sky. It was an overpowering sense of infinity and of purity, and was perhaps the beginning of a strong personal desire to know God and to be in harmony with His great purposes. Often since then I have felt the same kind of emotion, with the sense of an encircling presence as vast as the universe and perfect in purity. The effect upon me I could describe only as calm and peace; physically there was nothing." The "presence" is not to be further described, but simply to be felt.

[1] Cf. Professor James's discussion of the "Sense of Presence," "Varieties of Religious Experience," pp. 58–63.

"God is as real to me as the sense of happiness or the sense of love. As I sit by my friend, even abstracting the expression of his face, I often, by the communion of his soul and mine, know that he is my friend. So is God real to me. I feel that I have experienced His presence just as in church you sometimes *feel* the benediction. It is not tangible and so neither vague nor distinct. I *feel* it and I trust my feelings." "I experience His presence as I experience light and air, only it is more intimate as belonging to my real, permanent self. It is difficult to express in words. It is like being aware of life or love. I cannot conceive of living without Him. He is my life. . . . These experiences do not affect me mentally or physically, if I understand the question, but spiritually almost always. The mere name of Christ gives me happiness. Sometimes as I think of Him I wish to break through the barriers and go nearer — to die so as to be more fully where He is. Yet it is not a St. Teresa ecstasy. I come nearer to that in very everyday moments when love conquers selfishness in some small way. Sometimes then I feel in heaven and one with Him. It is exquisite rest, but still silent ecstacy. Then I am alive and could never die. If this sounds mystical, I am a mystic. I know that I am. It all comes to me so."

The same "sense of presence" described in some of the preceding responses, with the added feature of clearly spoken words, resembling St. Teresa's "locutions," is seen in the following: "The experience of

His presence was as definite as the sense of touching an external object, but the sensation seemed to come, so to speak, from within instead of from without. Still, the personality was clearly distinct from myself — and from any detached segment or substratum of myself. An illustration of this separate action is in the fact that the other personality could *speak to me* in words clearly enunciated but without sound. This silent form of speech . . . had the convincing force of a new revelation to me."

The experience is described in a number of other ways, some rather indefinite, but most of them emphasizing its intense nature. As for instance the following: "God is to me more real than all else besides — I am thrilled and filled with His love at times." "Yes, He is more real than any earthly friend. The feeling is deeper, calmer, larger. There is a repose and a constancy about it nothing else equals." "His presence in my thought is uplifting and helpful to mind and body. It is as distinct as the effect of tea or coffee."

The appearance of the outer world is sometimes changed — a phenomenon that commonly accompanies any sudden emotional disturbance, as conversion or love. "He gave me a bright revelation of Himself; even the grass and trees looked, oh, so beautiful."

Joy and intense love are common characteristics of the experience, the thought of God's greatness and majesty seldom entering the mind at the time.

God is a Companion, the "Lover of my soul," etc. — it is the personal rather than the cosmical aspects of the concept that are of importance. The latter, however, are sometimes of considerable influence, as in the following: "Although I believe at all times that God is great, good, omnipresent, etc., and that I am actually in communication with Him when I choose to be, it is only at intervals, and rare at that, that I realize what it means to be in such a situation. The feeling is then one of awe and exaltation as nearly as I can express it, and on the occasion when I can remember to have had the most vivid experience of this kind, it was so intense that I could only ask to have it taken away; it was almost crushing."

Clearer intellectual vision and a strengthened moral purpose are frequently mentioned among the effects of the experience. The two following responses, though illustrating a number of other matters, are here in point: —

"God is a very real presence to me. I feel that He is present with me at all times, only occasionally do I have an experience that seems particularly clear. It is usually at a time which seems critical to my development, when an influence may turn the course of my life from one extreme to another. At such crises I am conscious of an increase of power and will which makes stronger my determination to press forward toward righteousness. I hear no voice, I see no light or person, — but I feel an assurance that the course toward which I feel drawn is that which is

best. Mentally I receive courage and a clearer vision, an added power of will, and a purer thought; physically I have the common results of courage, a carelessness of pain, or of mental anguish, that enables me to reach an end that otherwise I am assured I should not attain. At these crises the experience is very real and distinct."

"At times God is very real to me. At such times He seems nearer and more real than any human being could be. At other times He seems real but more or less remote. There have been times throughout my life, beginning in early childhood, when I have believed myself to come consciously into the presence of God. Sometimes this has occurred when I have been in great sorrow or in great fear and dread. But sometimes I have felt this Presence without any special reason for it, — *e.g.*, when I have been alone out of doors or reading something that has touched me by its beauty and truth, I have felt a quick, glad sense that He was near, 'closer to me than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.' Such experiences while they last make me feel that I have come to my true self. I seem to understand life better for them. They are accompanied by no emotional excitement, only by a deep peace and gladness. I have never spoken of them to any one. These experiences are not habitual with me, that is, they do not occur very frequently. They afford me my strongest ground for belief in God."

At this point it will be profitable to revert to the

distinction made in Chapters V and VII between the two types of religious feeling — the abnormal excitement, and the calm and spontaneous emotion. If, with this distinction in mind, we look through the descriptions of religious feeling given by my respondents, we shall find that with one or two possible exceptions they all belong to the second or calmer type. The religious experience of the mature and cultured mind is at the antipodes from the excitement of the revival meeting. It seems to differ from it in kind rather than in degree. For in its own way it is as intense and brings as strong a sense of conviction as do any of the more extravagant forms of religious intoxication. It puts one's faith upon a plane superior to all argument. He who has once known it can never altogether forget it; he feels that he has had at least one glimpse into a new dimension of being. It is not to be described, but only to be experienced; a language which all the initiate — and only they — may speak or understand. This, at least, is the almost universal assertion of those who claim to have known this thing. With Browning's Abt Vogler they say: —

"God has a few of us whom He whispers in the ear;
The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know."

One of my respondents writes: "I find others have experience which makes them understand mine without explanation. A certain instinctive comprehension exists, though in matters of taste, education,

and temperament we may be quite far apart. There seems to be a common language of the soul learned through a life not possible to utter in words."

In looking over the results recorded in this chapter one should note in particular that the data here collected, if at all trustworthy, point decidedly to the great preponderance of affective experience over reasoning and authority as the basis of belief. The researches of Leuba and Starbuck, so far as they touch upon this question, point in the same direction. The importance of the affective life in the religious belief of my respondents is especially striking if we consider only those whom I have called the "church people," 32 out of 55 being of the mystic type, while all but 8 of the 55 were persuaded that they had experienced God's presence. If my respondents are really fair samples (as I believe them to be), we may conclude that belief in God to-day, with a large proportion of the religious community, is based, not on argument nor on authority, but on a private experience springing from that great background region of our consciousness which I have called the feeling mass, and which is so intimately bound up with life and all that life means.

CHAPTER IX

THE VALUE OF GOD

We have in a very general and incomplete manner traced the belief in God both in the race and in the individual. The question naturally presents itself: What is the present value of this belief? If it should die out, would it be a real loss? What does God *do* for people?

The question of the value of religious belief to the community at large has been discussed frequently and at length, and I have nothing whatever to add, at this point, to the discussion. The answers to my questionnaire do, however, throw some light on the value of God to the individual, and it is this which I mean to deal with, quite briefly, in the present chapter.

I

And first of all, what do people *mean* by God? The question in my circular (question 2) which concerns itself with this, was, on the whole, not very successful. In fact I had anticipated this result, for it, more than any of the others, was of a nature to put the mind into an unnatural position. Still some of

the more general results of this question are, I believe, both significant and trustworthy. Out of the 74 who answered it 71 believed in some kind of God, and of these 71 all but 3 insisted that their God was personal. Personality was usually defined as the possession of thought, feeling, and will. Farther than this the anthropomorphic tendency seldom went. More than half of the answers were, of course, decidedly conventional in tone and seemed to reflect little independent thought. But one result of the answers as a whole that seems fairly clear is that God's "attributes" play a comparatively unimportant part in the minds of religious people, and that His relation to individuals is the really important factor in the concept. People are chiefly interested not in what God *is*, but in what He can *do*. Two-thirds of my respondents describe Him as "Father," "Friend," "Companion," "the ally of my ideals," or by some equivalent expression; while only 12 thought it worth while to mention the fact that He is omnipotent, 9 called Him Creator, 3 mentioned Him as the Trinity, and one as the "Great First Cause." Doubtless most of my respondents, if asked whether God were all these latter things, would respond Yes; the significant fact is that these attributes play so unimportant a part in their conception of Him that when asked to define that conception these attributes never enter their minds. Professor Leuba seems to be right in the main when he says that God is used rather than understood; the religious consciousness

cares little who God is, but wants to make use of Him for various ends.[1]

While the concept of God is, however, in one sense decidedly pragmatic, it would be a mistake to suppose that the ends for which the religious consciousness wishes to use God are chiefly ordinary utilitarian ends — such as protector, "meat purveyor," etc. Unless my respondents are very unusual people, the chief use for which God is desired is distinctly social rather than material. God is valued as an end in Himself rather than as a means to other ends. Most people want God for the same reason for which they want friends, and His relation to them is exactly that of a very dear and very lovable and very sympathizing friend. It is quite naïve, no doubt, but perfectly simple. Thus 53 out of 73 of my respondents affirm that God is as real to them as an earthly friend. Doubtless some of the 53 answered as they did in a purely conventional spirit, but that this was not the case with more than a small proportion is shown by the general tone of the answers to the other questions. The God whom most people want and whom many people have is a very real and sympathizing friend. Like other friends he is, to be sure, not only an end in Himself, but a means to other ends; He can help one to many things that one wants. These things, however, are as a rule not material benefits. They are chiefly of three kinds: comfort in trouble, hope for the future, and assistance in striving after righteousness.

[1] "The Contents of Religious Consciousness," *Monist*, XI, 571.

II

I can best convey an idea of the value of God to religious people and of the things that He does for them by quoting a few of the answers to question 4, which was as follows: "If you should become thoroughly convinced that there was no God, would it make any great difference in your life — either in happiness, morality, or in other respects?" I asked this question, not with the purpose of learning what would be the result of such a loss of faith, — for that, of course, no one knows and many of the respondents have doubtless greatly overestimated the actual result, — but in order to see just how much value believing people attribute to their belief.

In passing I will say that of the 50 who answered this question definitely, 40 affirmed that the loss of belief would diminish their happiness, 25 said it would undermine or weaken their morality, and 6 anticipated no difference in either way. I attribute no special significance to these exact figures, of course; it is the spirit and general tone of the answers that are significant, and they will speak for themselves. I set down here some of the most typical. "If it were proven to me that there was no God, it would make no difference in my morality or manner of living, or happiness when everything is going all right. When trouble comes it would." "It would make no difference in morality. I have known times when

if I did *not* believe I would have been unhappy. At these times I did want help. . . . When I need Him, He is real; at other times not." In these cases God is used only to help out in emergencies, and then in a purely extraneous manner. He is a means, not an end. Somewhat similar in tone, though profounder in thought, is the following: "I do not think it would make a tremendous difference in my life if I could also think that good is good and not illusion, that any way we are striving for a cause, that progress is something real. But if we were to disappear to-morrow and not a thought or a result be left, even if God exists, I do not care to struggle. . . . Can we look forward? That is the only question. But if there is no God, I don't see how we can."

That God should be desired only or chiefly as a means of insuring to us something else, as in the cases just quoted, is the exception rather than the rule with truly religious natures. Much more common than the above are expressions like the following: "He is as much a necessity to my spiritual existence as the elements of pure air are to my physical system in the preservation of life and health." "If I were convinced there was no God, I fear a sense of loneliness would become intolerable." "It would be like blotting out the sun." "It would plunge me in darkness and despair, but no one could make me believe it, for I have the witness in myself." "If I became convinced that there was no God . . . it would make the greatest difference in my life both in happiness,

which is largely dependent upon hope, and in morality. I should 'live, drink and be merry' with a vengeance and indulge myself in many excesses. I am sure of this." "I should go mad, I think. . . . There would be no I, no anything. He is the life of life to me, in everything making the vital meaning of even small things — flowers — all beauty. He is the hidden strength of my strength and the stay of my weakness — some one to understand me and to be there always, requiring, reproving, but loving." "If I should become convinced that there is no God, then life for me would not be worth living. All my ideas and ideals must needs undergo complete modification. I should have no zest for pleasure, no courage to bear pain, no aims in life. I should fear death, yet long for death to end the farce of living." "As for any repose or ability to face life and death with composure, any incentive to be perfect in things hidden from outsiders, any exhilaration in living and trying to do my best — I cannot conceive it without the idea of God. . . . To live, on the contrary, with this constant feeling of common nature and common work with God is educative and constructive in itself, and gives, to me at least, in spite of innumerable shortcomings, the exhilaration of untold attainments and possibilities in the future, and puts a dignity as well as a joy into everything."

As I have said, it is quite probable that the results of loss of belief would not be so serious, either to

happiness or to morality, as my respondents imagine. After a time things would shape themselves together somehow. And yet there can be no doubt that the common belief in a personal and sympathetic God must be a great aid in the moral life. We are but children of a larger growth, and to support our feeble virtue most of us need the thought of an ideal divine friend who cares, in exactly the same way that the tempted child needs the thought of his mother. Many a man who would give no heed to the categorical imperative, will resolutely turn his back on temptation "for His sake." It was a profound saying of Voltaire that if there were no God, we should have to invent one.

The happiness which is due to religious belief is, of course, in part owing to the many things which God, and God only, is conceived of as able to give. Especially are immortality and the hope of seeing one's lost friends regarded as dependent on God; hence loss of belief in Him would shatter the hopes which to many a religious soul are the dearest of all. Besides this, God is of use at times of crisis to give strength and help of various kinds. But though all this is true, I must repeat my former assertion, that the religious consciousness values God chiefly as a companion. The need of Him is a *social* need. Religious people would *miss* Him if they should lose their faith, just as they miss a dead friend. Of course, in one sense they would get over it, just as they get over missing their dearest dead. But the universe would still be

that much poorer, life that much less worth the living — and very much lonelier. The God-consciousness, even in its most superficial and conventional forms, is a defence against the feeling of utter loneliness and isolation that comes upon most of us at times. Between me and my nearest friend there is a wall that can never be quite broken down — he can never really understand my feelings or know me as I am. Now, only the concept of a God who knows with an immediate knowledge — who has a co-experience with mine — can ward off this feeling. Hence one who is assured that He is closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet, can never feel entirely forsaken or desolate; for wherever he goes he believes that he carries his dearest friend with him. It must be noted, too, that God is desired not as an *object* of love merely, but also as one who loves in return. Says Professor Coe, "When Spinoza proposed a kind of love for God that made no demands upon God for a sympathetic response, he proposed something that never has met the needs of man and never can meet them." [1]

Another social value of the concept of God is His character as the ultimate, unprejudiced, and absolutely infallible judge of my actions and my motives. He is the one to whom I may appeal for justification and appreciation in the last resource. Not outward justification this, not a setting right before the

[1] "The Spiritual Life."

world; but I know that if all men misjudge me, still there is One who sees my true motives, and who really understands me. Somewhere in the universe justice is done me, the truth about me is seen in its real light. One of my respondents describes religion as "the social appeal for corroboration, consolation, etc., when things are going wrong with my causes (my truth denied, etc.)." Another speaks of God as "a real but invisible Presence that *understands*" (the emphasis is his). It is not the hope of immortality, but this deep assurance that, spite of the opinions of men, there is One who sees his real integrity, that is the only consolation of Job in his affliction. "But as for me I know that my Vindicator liveth." In speaking of the "social self" in his "Psychology," Professor James says: "The ideal social self which I thus seek . . . may be very remote; it may be represented as barely possible. I may not hope for its realization during my lifetime; I may even expect the future generations, which would approve me if they knew me, to know nothing about me when I am dead and gone. Yet still the emotion that beckons me on is indubitably the pursuit of an ideal social self, of a self that is at least *worthy* of approving recognition by the highest *possible* judging companion, if such companion there be. This self is the true, the intimate, the ultimate, the permanent Me which I seek. This judge is God, the Absolute Mind, the 'Great Companion.' . . . All progress in the social self is the substitution of higher tribunals for

lower; this ideal tribunal is the highest; and most men, either continually or occasionally, carry a reference to it in their breast. The humblest outcast on this earth can feel himself to be real and valid by means of this higher recognition. And, on the other hand, for most of us, a world with no such inner refuge when the outer social self failed and dropped from us would be the abyss of horror." [1]

III

Still more light will be thrown on the value of God to the religious consciousness by a study of prayer; for, as Sabatier says, "Prayer is religion in act — that is to say, real religion. It is prayer which distinguishes religious phenomena from all those which resemble them or lie near to them, from the moral sense, for instance, or æsthetic feeling." [2]

Question 6 of my questionnaire read as follows: "Do you pray, and if so, why? That is, is it purely from habit and social custom, or do you feel that God hears your prayers? Is prayer with you one-sided or two-sided — *i.e.* do you sometimes feel that in prayer you receive something — such as strength or the divine spirit — from God? Is it a real communion?"

The answers to this question indicate that while in nearly all cases prayer begins as a habit inculcated

[1] "Principles of Psychology," Vol. I, pp. 315, 316.

[2] "Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion" (English translation), p. 27.

upon the child, it is kept up chiefly — almost entirely — for other reasons. Out of my 72 respondents to this question, 68 pray, and only 13 of these mention habit as having anything to do with it. All but one or two of these 13, moreover, speak of habit as a very subordinate element in their prayers. I need hardly say that I attribute very little significance to these exact figures and mention them only to show in a general way the importance which my respondents assign to habit in this connection. The following answer probably shows the true place of habit in the prayers of most religious people: "Prayer has doubtless become a habit with me to a great extent through early training, and yet that was but the beginning I am sure, for other things in which I was trained are abandoned if the necessity for them vanishes, while the habit of prayer becomes stronger the longer I live."

The real reason why people pray is well expressed by the same respondent. "I believe I pray because I can't help it. It is almost an instinct, and however it would have been with different training, I could no more help praying now than thinking." [1] Another writes, "I pray because when I feel especially joyful I simply have to thank God." To quote again from Professor James: "We hear, in these days of scientific enlightenment, a great deal of discussion

[1] Cf. Guimaraens, "Le Besoin de Prier:" "Il n'est autre qu'un état affectif, un besoin affectif, 'primum movens' . . . partant d'origines fort complexes, surgissant des profondeurs de tout notre être." *Rev. Phil.*, LIV, 391–412.

about the efficacy of prayer; and many reasons are given us why we should not pray, whilst others are given us why we should. But in all this very little is said of the reason why we *do* pray, which is simply that we cannot *help* praying. It seems probable that, in spite of all that 'science' may do to the contrary, men will continue to pray to the end of time, unless their mental nature changes in a manner which nothing we know should lead us to expect. The impulse to pray is a necessary consequence of the fact that whilst the innermost of the empirical selves of a man is a self of the *social* sort, it yet can find its only adequate *Socius* in an ideal world." [1]

The answer given to my question by a large proportion of the respondents is: "I pray because God hears." Nearly all feel very sure that prayer is two-sided, and insist that they receive something from God by means of it.[2] A few use God in prayer to get certain definite things that they want. One woman regained her lost son as an immediate answer to prayer. In another case, where a woman lost her glasses out of the car window, God found them and returned them by means of the conductor.

But cases like these are rare. Not many people use God to find their children and their spectacles.

[1] "Psychology," Vol. I, p. 316.

[2] Cf. a "Study of Prayer," by F. O. Beck, in the *Jour. of Rel. Psy. and Ped.* for March, 1906. Nearly 70 *per cent* of Mr. Beck's respondents "state that they feel the presence of a higher power while in the act of praying" (p. 118).

So far as He is regarded (pragmatically) as a giver at all, it is strength and insight and comfort that He gives. That these things do come from prayer is an empirical fact recognized by many people who are theoretically quite skeptical.[1] A scientific friend of mine who, though he has lost most of his old religious belief, still prays at times, tells me: "Even now I get comfort after them; 'things' go better. Possibly that may be a change in my attitude toward the things." Another scientist writes, "I pray largely from habit; yet in time of trouble there is lots of comfort in struggling my best and throwing the responsibility on Him." The following is from a skeptical friend who very seldom prays at all: "I have difficulty in conceiving the something I am naming God coherently enough to call a single being of any sort. But I think at rare intervals I have experienced something like a movement of God toward me. It generally happens when I stop fighting and rely on assistance. For example, lately before going into a trial which threatened to involve me in personal dishonor I prayed 'like a kid,' and seemed to get

[1] Cf. W. C. Brownell's article on Matthew Arnold: "The influence of the Holy Spirit, exquisitely called the Comforter, is a matter of actual experience, as solid a reality as that of electromagnetism." *Scribner's*, XXX, 112. (Quoted also in James' "Varieties," p. 515.) Cf. also Mr. Beck's "Study of Prayer." Almost all his respondents feel the "manifestation of unusual power" through prayer, though they are about equally divided on the question whether this power comes from without or from within.

response immediately. The physical result was immediate quieting of nerves. Mentally it gave me a lot of courage." Another friend writes, "I don't know how much God knows about my prayers, but am sure that *I* am benefited." Still another: "Yes, I pray for strength to obey the laws of nature which are the laws of God. . . . To pray for help may not bring help from God, but it keeps in mind the *need* of strength, hence the strength comes." "I pray because I feel that by so doing my moral life is uplifted, *i.e.* negatively I resist temptation I would not otherwise, and positively I feel more strength to do good work. My greater or less willingness to pray is like the thermometer of my whole activity. If I do not or cannot pray, I know I am pretty low down."

I have quoted these cases at length to show that even doubt does not destroy the efficacy of prayer. Whatever these persons may think about God in moments of speculation and however they may explain their experience, in hours of emergency they use their God just as other people do and are perfectly certain of the practical benefit. If these people receive help, *a fortiori* do those whose faith is troubled by no doubts. "The help is very practical," writes one woman. "Many times as a teacher I have gone to the classroom utterly unequal to the work, or to meet a crisis, and depending entirely on the promise of wisdom and strength to be given. At such times I have done my best and most successful work." Another woman writes: "In this matter more than

in the other things about which you have asked, I rest on personal evidence. In time of perplexity about important matters I have found my judgment clarified and my decision shaping itself as a result of prayer, in much the same way that I have found myself affected by consultation with a wise friend. . . . I have still the feeling that I am left to make up my own mind but that my mind is working at its best. . . . I know that prayer makes possible the carrying of heavy burdens with serenity, and doing one's ordinary work with an undivided mind in spite of anxiety and sorrow. I know that prayer creates an atmosphere of the spirit, an elevation above pettiness and irritation, a warmth of affection for others, and a triumph over selfishness that no amount of philosophizing or reasoning with one's self can produce." [1]

But, after all, the religious consciousness seems to value prayer, not so much for the benefits which it believes God gives in answer, as because it feels as-

[1] Cf. an article in the *Outlook* for August 11, 1906, entitled "The Art of Prayer." The writer speaks of his own experience thus: "Times without number, in moments of supreme doubt, disappointment, discouragement, unhappiness, a certain prayer-formula, which by degrees has built itself up in my mind, has been followed in its utterance by quick and astonishing relief. Sometimes doubt has been transformed into confident assurance, mental weakness utterly routed by strength, self-distrust changed into self-confidence, fear into courage, dismay into confident and brightest hope. These transitions have sometimes come by degrees — in the course, let us say, of an hour or two; at other times they have been instantaneous, flashing up in brain and heart as if a powerful electric stroke had cleared the air."

sured that by means of it one comes into an immediate social relationship with God. Dr. J. R. Illingworth, in his recent book entitled "Christian Character," says of prayer: "Its human analogue is not petition, but intercourse with a friend. Primarily we desire such intercourse as an end in itself, simply because our friend is our friend, and the fact of converse with him manifests and satisfies our friendship." More than half of my respondents insist that prayer is to them a real communion. Not all conceive the power with whom they commune in thoroughly anthropomorphic terms; for some prayer opens a door into a larger life, a source of strength, not further to be defined. Yet for all, this larger life is sufficiently like our own for one's relation to it to be conceived in social terms. It is not as a Giver but as a Companion that God is chiefly valued and sought for in prayer. "Essentially," writes one man, "I pray to enjoy a higher communion than is possible for me with any human soul." "Prayer is to spiritual life what breathing is to natural life." "I pray because I want to and like to, and feel that God understands, and I like the sympathy of it." "Prayer is natural, *not* one-sided. I feel that there is an *interchange* of something, I knew not what, between me and that unseen, but felt-to-be-present, being." "I pray — not in set terms very much — but I turn to God in all places and at all times, more or less, and I have felt real communion, hindered or dulled often by tired nerves or a whirlwind of emotion more earthly,

or by sin more often, but I sometimes have it; and more constantly if not quite communion, yet a strong dimmed sense of response — something I cannot quite hold, but feel."

The results from my various questions as bearing upon the value of God would, therefore, seem to point all one way. God is valued, not as an explanation of things and an assistance to the understanding, but rather as an immediate help in the practical and emotional life. And while it is true that He is used rather than understood, it is not so much His gifts as Himself that is longed for and desired by the deeply religious soul. It is an utterly mistaken view to suppose, as Professor Leuba does, that the religious mind "cares very little who God is, or even whether He is at all." The tone of my answers shows this clearly enough. To be sure, they care little enough about His metaphysical attributes; but to His real existence and to His social and personal relation to them they do cling with passionate earnestness. "Not God," says Leuba, "but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is in the last analysis the end of religion." If God be taken to mean the collection of abstract attributes set up by scholasticism and maintained by an antiquated theology, this is true. But taken in any other sense it is profoundly untrue. "A larger, richer life" is indeed the end of religion; but this larger life religion everywhere identifies with what it means by its God. It feels assured by its own deepest experiences that this larger life is near it,

around it, and that one may draw from this illimitable source new strength for one's own needs. It recognizes this larger life as not differing essentially in nature from its own; and it calls it God. This God it values chiefly for what He is — not as "meat purveyor" but as a "larger, richer, more satisfying life," and one with which the little life knows by its vital experiences that it may make connection.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

SINCE taking leave of the first two chapters we have been forced to wander rather far afield in the realms of racial and individual history, and I fear the reader may at times have felt uncertain of his bearings and have been unable to see the forest for the trees. Yet if the subject was to be treated in anything but a most superficial and sketchy manner, a somewhat detailed study of the facts seemed necessary. At length, however, we have reached a point where our attention need no longer be monopolized by the details of the journey and from which we may get a wider and more general survey of the whole course of our wanderings and take stock of what we have gained since first we started on our travels.

I

The most salient feature of such a retrospective view is the relation and comparative importance of the three chief types of religious belief. The Religion of Primitive Credulity is found at its best in the childhood of the race and the childhood of the individual, — among the naïve and unsophisticated who accept

the presented because it is presented, in accordance with the natural, innate reaction of the mind. Even after the possibility of doubt has long been recognized, religious faith often rests chiefly upon an authority which makes appeal to no argument and no experience, but merely to the mind's natural and primitive credulity. To accept one's theology ready-made from others in this uncritical manner was for ages almost universally regarded as the proper and only thing to do; the tendency to do so was in the air that one breathed and was hardly to be resisted.

Such, however, is no longer the case. Belief from authority is by no means in the air to-day. Nor is this true merely of religious matters; there is a general reaction against uncritical acceptance of the authority of tradition in all fields of thought. To say nothing of popular science and philosophy, and to take only one example from many, the critical tendency is strikingly obvious in the present status of the political ideas which we in America have received from our fathers. Fifty years ago no one thought it possible to question the inspired nature of the Declaration of Independence; but the political higher critic of to-day has not hesitated to make its claims to infallibility and plenary inspiration an object of attack and sometimes even of ridicule. In like manner the wisdom of the Monroe Doctrine is often denied, and one does not have to go far to hear it seriously questioned whether the Revolution was not a mistake and whether national independence is of any real value.

These new views are not due to any new data nor to any new powers of reasoning developed in the present generation, but rather to the psychological atmosphere of the times. To accept without criticism what we have been taught and what our fathers have believed is no longer the thing to do. I do not say this is an age of doubt and scepticism, but it is an age of free inquiry and independent thought. It accepts much on the authority of experts, but tries to accept nothing on the authority of tradition or without a reason.

So it is with religion. Belief from authority in the sense of a reasoned belief is still important and doubtless will always be so. But belief from authority in the sense of primitive credulity is meeting with tremendous losses year by year and day by day. Thousands among the most orthodox are beginning to wake up to the fact that they do not really believe what they thought they did and that many of the old dogmas to which they have adhered merely because of early teaching must soon go by the board. An acquaintance of mine, a good Presbyterian elder, well expressed the attitude of these people when he remarked, not long ago, "I can see plainly enough that the time is coming when I shall have to believe what I believe."

An instance of this new spirit of independence in religion is to be seen in the cold or even hostile attitude which the laboring classes are beginning to assume toward the Church, the world over. It was among them that the Religion of Primitive Credulity

used formerly to find the great mass of its adherents, and their rebellion against it (for no other term seems quite adequate) is a most serious blow to it and a most significant fact for us. If the Religion of Primitive Credulity loses its hold over the uncultivated and illiterate, it must shrink to a very second-rate factor in the religious life of the world. To be sure, it will always count among its adherents all children brought up under religious influences; but the great majority of these it will regularly lose as they come to years of independent thought; and though it is unlikely that the day will ever come when it will cease to play a subordinate part in the lives of all of us, that part will be increasingly subordinate as the years go by, and it will soon cease to rank as a peer of the other forms of religious belief dealt with in this book. The old world has at last outgrown its childhood and must put away childish things. We need therefore consider this primitive form of belief no further but shall turn at once to our final consideration and evaluation of the Religion of Thought and the Religion of Feeling.

II

Throughout the course of our study I have tried to show the great importance of both the intellectual and the affective elements of the mind in their relation to religion, as well as some of the historical and psychological reasons which in my judgment point to the affective element as much the more fundamental

of the two. I do not wish to be understood as assigning no value to thought in religion. Without thought, all belief in anything that could be called divine would be so vague that it could never be referred to, much less communicated and inculcated, and it would therefore cease altogether to have social value. The result would be that, except for a detached mystic here and there, it would die out in a generation. To exist, belief must be made articulate, and for this purpose thought is essential.

Neither should the great importance and value of authority be overlooked. And here I refer to authority in its more intellectualistic sense, as a special kind of argument. As such it must inevitably — and very properly — have great influence in maintaining faith throughout adult life. As Balfour has pointed out, most of our beliefs are based on authority.[1] And it is quite fitting that this should have its influence on religious beliefs as well as on others. With the spread of critical study of the Bible and of Church dogma, however, authority in religion will lose its absolute and dictatory character. The day will never return when the Bible can be considered as authority in the first sense of the word — an absolute and unquestionable authority. There are no longer any absolute authorities. On the other hand, the day will never come when the Bible will cease to be an authority — and a most powerful one — in the

[1] "Foundations of Belief," pp. 202–238.

second sense of the word. The insight of its writers and its heroes has been too profound for that, its pages are too glowing and too luminous with spiritual light, the sources of its streams too deep in the life of the race, for it ever to fail in its ministrations to the passing generations of mankind. It is so religious a book and so human a book that its authority over the hearts of men can never be lost so long as men remain truly religious and truly human. But authority in matters of religion has ceased to be confined to the Bible or to any book or church or explicit formulation, and is becoming, in reality, a general argument from the experience of all those whose spiritual life has been deep and influential, whether in the Bible or out of it. It must be noted in passing, moreover, that arguments from authority such as this will draw all their strength ultimately from the affective experience.

In one other way, moreover, religion will always need the aid of thought, namely, to protect it from dangers of a purely intellectual nature. There are certain anti-religious beliefs which take particularly strong hold on the popular imagination and with which critical thought can very well deal. The best example of these is, of course, materialism, and the service which reason has rendered to religion in warding off its attack is of great importance. Thanks to it, materialism scarcely poses any longer as a serious attempt completely to explain the universe. Haeckel stands almost alone in defending it. His courage

is as admirable as that of the boy who stood on the burning deck, "whence all but him had fled."

But it is not only against external foes that religion needs protection; it must be safeguarded as well against the inherent diseases to which it is specially liable, against the deadening influence of traditional and stagnant creeds which have long since outgrown their significance and their usefulness. We say that religion is at a crisis to-day; and I believe this is profoundly true. But the more deeply one studies the history of religion the more one is struck with the fact that religion is always at a crisis. There has never been a period of human progress that has not been critical for religion. And I believe a careful consideration of the causes of this fact will show that this must always be the case so long as human thought maintains a healthy growth. For every advance in thought necessarily demands a corresponding advance in religious conceptions or religious imagery. And the religion which lacks adaptability to the new thought of the times, the religion which remains rigid, inelastic, fixed in its traditional formulations and bound forever to a dead past, must inevitably go to the wall. This was the fate of the formalistic religion of the Brahmans in India and of the formalistic faith of the Romans. This was the fate even of the beautiful religion of the Greeks; for, though it was far removed from rigidity and authoritative formulation, it was by its very nature funda-

mentally incapable of keeping pace with the development of Greek thought. It lacked depth and substance and was unable, without absolute transformation, to develop into a religion that could satisfy the spiritual and intellectual demands of the later Greek world. The reformation of the religion of Israel under Amos, described on pages 122–127, is another case in point. Had not the Hebrew conception of Yahweh been enlarged and adapted to the new conditions, his worship would have been wiped from the face of the earth and from the memories of men, and he would mean no more to us to-day than Chemosh of the Moabites. And so it must be with every faith. Among every people that *thinks* religion must always be at a crisis; for progress is the life of thought and crisis is essential to the life of religion. It must forever be sloughing off an old shell and growing a new one. The shell indeed is important; but woe to the religion which identifies its life with its shell, or refuses to part with its shell when this has ceased to be a protection and has become a clamping, choking incumbrance to the growth of its inner life. If Christianity had identified itself with the Ptolemaic doctrine that the earth is stationary, it would have perished long ago; for, as Galileo is said to have whispered under his breath at the time of his recantation, "It moves just the same!" Yes, it moves just the same, and so do the thoughts of men. And if Christianity to-day should identify itself with the infallibility of the Scriptures, or with the Creation according

to Genesis, or with any of the dogmas of Christology, it would condemn itself to swift decay. It must be broad and great enough to accept all that science and criticism have to say and brave enough to face the whole truth and the whole future without fear. In short, the very life of religion depends upon its being able to distinguish between those things which for its age are essentials and those which may be parted with as non-essentials; upon its being able to adapt itself to the ever advancing thought of its time. And to do this it must of course look to thought itself for help. In thus formulating and reformulating the conceptions of religion in conformity with the progress of human knowledge and reflection, reason will ever find a most useful sphere in the service of religion.

It may even be admitted that, for the few philosophically minded, thought may of itself furnish a belief thoroughly satisfying and may possibly even reach the absolute truth. I am not contending against the validity of idealism. To be sure, its disciples are few, most of them disagree with each other as to what idealism is, and the great majority of them in all probability owe their philosophic creeds as much to the æsthetic or the mystical side of the idealistic *Weltanschauung* as to any logical compulsion. Still, I will not deny that some philosophers may have reached the absolute truth of things, and this by reasoning alone. The paucity of their number is of course no disproof of their doctrine. In

questions of truth and falsehood it is irrelevant to count heads.

But in looking for a firm basis for religion it is not irrelevant to count heads. A subtile argument which only a score of the most brilliant philosophers can appreciate and accept can never form a foundation for the faith of a people. And when the popular and easily comprehensible arguments are overthrown (as I have tried in Chapter VI to show has been the case), then thought must cease to figure as an original source and an independent basis of religious belief.

To this, of course, the answer naturally suggests itself that perhaps "the people" may be educated up to "Philosophy." But what, after all, is "Philosophy"? Does it mean Hegel or Hume, Thomas Aquinas, or Thomas Huxley? Read any thorough and unprejudiced History of Philosophy, such as Windelband's, and what is the impression at the end? Great advances have indeed been made, crude and naïve ideas have been rationalized, truly new and original conceptions have been advanced, the thoughts of the early philosophers have been carried to their logical conclusions and their presuppositions discovered and clearly exhibited. We are much less naïve than our fathers were, and we have a much more intelligent grasp of the nature of the mind and of the mind's problem than they had. In short, real and undeniable progress has been made in Philosophy as in most things else. Yet if it come to a question of definite results, of problems surely solved and per-

plexing questions forever laid to rest, one must feel indeed somewhat chagrined. The long list of splendid names of which Philosophy boasts makes the sorry little sum of definitely demonstrated and generally accepted philosophical truth seem meager in the extreme. How much farther along are we, one may well ask, toward really settling the problems and coming to any definite and thoroughly satisfactory conclusion than the Greeks were? The tendency toward skepticism is just about as strong as in the days of the Sophists, but no stronger. Neither the theists nor the atheists have been able to prove their point to the satisfaction of the other. Idealism and realism are still having it out. We are about as far from knowing what Reality is as we ever were. What has metaphysics really settled? Does it stand for anything in particular? If you tell me that a man has been converted to Christianity, I know in a general way what you mean. If you should tell me he had been converted to Philosophy, would you be saying anything at all?

III

In abandoning reason as a sufficient basis for religion, we are forced back on the region of feeling and of instinctive and unreasoned demands and intuitions. Here must Religion take up her stand and make her fight. From this quarter she must draw her chief supplies or be starved into surrender. Is this region "sufficient for these things"?

In Chapters VIII and IX I tried to show that among a large portion of religious people to-day the experience of the affective life is the real basis of belief. But how is this possible? Is not belief, it will be asked, in the last analysis an intellectual assent, and if so, is not feeling entirely irrelevant, except perhaps as a datum for an argument?

My answer to this question has, of course, been given in Chapter II. If I was right in my analysis of belief, intellectual assent is only one species of it, emotional conviction or reality feeling being an equally common and important type. The former kind — the recognition of the truth of a proposition — is a matter of the intellect alone; an unembodied spirit of pure thought, without emotions or wishes or impulses or interests, would possess beliefs of this kind and of this kind only. Mathematical truths are the best examples. I believe that the sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles; I recognize the truth of this proposition. The other psychical state denoted by the term "belief" is less a matter of the intellect than of the whole psychophysical organism. It is voluntaristic rather than intellectual. It is a demand rather than a recognition. Our hypothetical disembodied spirit whose life consists of "*reines Denken*" could not conceive this kind of belief, nor could its nature ever be explained to him. It is in a different world from his. It is not an *awareness*, but an *attitude*, and is based, not on an argument, but on a demand.

Most of our practical beliefs are of this nature. While occupied with mathematics or logic we may live in a world of pure reason, but no sooner do we rise from our work than we find ourselves in a world of very mixed reason, where will attitudes take the place of pure awareness. Our nature is such that pure thought is seldom possible; and the man who tries to be guided in all his beliefs and all his actions by reason alone, and always inhibits the affective, impulsive factors, is very generally and rightly known as a crank.

Beliefs based upon feeling or upon demands are, of course, of different degrees of strength according to the force and nature of the demand out of which they spring. They vary all the way from comparatively superficial matters in which we say "the wish is father to the thought" to those inborn beliefs which are the reciprocal terms to certain instinctive and native impulses. As said in Chapter II, our instinctive demands refuse to admit as possible their own denial; they insist upon the real existence of that which can satisfy them. The "will to believe" goes very deep in our organism, and it is only after a long process of intellectual training that we come to admit, if we ever do, the possibility that there may nowhere exist the thing for which our being seems made. The deepest of all these inborn impulses is the "instinct of self-preservation," and hand in hand with it goes the corresponding belief in the impossibility of real annihilation. The normal child cannot

believe in his own death. Others may die, but not he; and this because he wills to live. The whole strength of his being calls out for life and endless life. He grows older and more sophisticated, but this first instinctive belief of his is never given up, but only modified and transmuted into another form — the belief, namely, that though the body must die, he, the real self of him, will continue to live; for live he must and will. This new belief is, you will say, as naïve as the first; but it is almost as strong, almost as instinctive, and much more enduring and hard to eradicate.

Very closely connected with this instinctive impulse for life and its correlative belief are the impulses and beliefs which we know as religious. The very life in us insists that it must not and shall not die, insists that somewhere and somehow there must and shall be a greater life from which our lives may draw new strength. "More life, a larger, richer life," both now and always, is what it needs and demands and what it therefore believes in. Such belief may, of course, be naïve, and by a long course of reasoning and by dwelling for years in the cooler sphere of intellect, one may at length overcome it and silence the voice of its demands. But this will aways be the result of artificial conditions and influences, and the old naïve impulse and belief, we may be very sure, will continue for ages to be reborn with every child.

The belief in God of the Religion of Feeling is then, I repeat, a vital, rather than a theoretical, matter,

and, like breathing, is an outcome of the needs and demands of the organism, not of the reason. It has its roots deep in the field of vital feeling; its roots go deeper than do those of most of our practical beliefs. It is an attitude toward the universe; our reaction to the stimulus of the whole cosmos. This reflex is determined by no momentary reasoning of the individual. The whole line of his heredity, the whole of his conscious and of his subconscious personality, is involved in it. It is not so much the individual that thinks; the race thinks in him.[1] I might better say the race feels and wills in him. It is the feeling background that determines his belief, and this might be described as the reason and experience of the race become organic. In this sense, religious belief, apart from its accidental and purely intellectual accretions, is biological rather than conceptual, it is not so much the acceptance of a proposition as an instinct. I do not mean by this that it is an instinct in the technical sense of the term, but it has its roots in the same field, and is in many ways comparable. An instinct might be roughly described as an organic belief. It cannot be reasoned out; it must simply be accepted and obeyed. The young bird before her first migration to the south or before her first period of motherhood, we must suppose, feels a blind impulse to start southward or to build her nest. She cannot tell why it is; she simply obeys.

[1] Cf. the famous saying of Bastian's as to primitive man.

The religious consciousness in which the mystical germ is somewhat developed is in a similar position. It may be utterly in the dark as to the nature of the Cosmos so far as all reasoning goes. It can see God no more than the bird can see the south-land. It simply accepts what it finds — and for the same reason the bird has in flying south: *it must.* "Lord, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." The immense popularity of this sentence of Augustine's among religious people of all sorts and of all times is an indication of its truth as a psychological description.

Such a belief is in essence quite independent of argument. Argument is irrelevant to it. The particular formulations that arise from it in order to make it articulate may be refuted, but the fundamental religious demand and attitude is not amenable to refutation. For it must be remembered that this belief is not the result of an argument based on an emotional experience; it is an immediate *experience of belief.* It is an organic, a biological matter, and hence has a strength and certainty that puts its possessor quite out of the region of doubt. This absolute certainty is characteristic of the Religion of Feeling in all times and in all creeds. I have illustrated it by the mystics referred to in Chapter VI and by those who were classed under the mystic type in Chapter VIII; these all insisting with one voice that theirs was an immediate experience of God simply not to be argued about, doubted, or questioned.

The particular mental image associated with the experience differs, of course, with the individual, but the absolute assurance and sense of immediate insight is never lost. No course of reasoning is ever able to bring about such a feeling of certainty.

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint and heard great argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by that same door where in I went.

* * * * * * *

"Then of the Thee in Me who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without — 'The Me Within Thee Blind !'"

If the Thee in Me is blind, then indeed there is no answer. But the mystics always insist that the Thee in Me is able at least dimly to see light ahead; and though they clothe the light in all manner of contradictory forms, they agree in being absolutely certain that the light is there.

The Religion of Feeling in its calmer, more refined, more normal condition must not be confused with its extremes and its excrescences. There have, indeed, been many clearly pathological mystics. This must be frankly admitted; and Kraft-Ebbing, Murisier, Leuba, and other investigators like them have done well in studying and analyzing these extravagant and degenerate forms. But it is a mistake to use the extreme cases as the typical ones and to identify mysticism with a few abnormal mediæval monks. Of

course, if you start out by defining mysticism as a "*maladie des sentiments religieux*," an abnormal condition, then it is abnormal, sure enough. This is only a question of terminology, and every one is at liberty to make his own definitions and to limit the subject of his study as he chooses. All I can say is that such a definition does not describe what *I* mean by mysticism, that I am studying quite another phenomenon, and that the thing I mean by the term has a quite different denotation, covering, namely, all those persons who believe themselves to have an immediate apprehension of a larger Life encircling theirs. These people are of many different stages of intellectual culture, varying from an Emerson or a Wordsworth down to the humblest person who believes that he knows the meaning of "God's presence," but the great majority of them thoroughly normal, thoroughly sane and healthy of mind. It is these people whom I claim for the typical mystics, the abnormal Indian Yogins and mediæval visionaries and modern revival converts who "get religion" and the "second blessing" being related to them as any pathological case is to its normal prototype. The distinction I have so often drawn between the two kinds of religious feeling must never be lost from sight. Nor should the fact that the pathological phenomena belong in the same marginal region as the mystic consciousness be permitted to invalidate the latter. It must be remembered that there are also pathological phenomena in the regions of sensation and thought;

and the existence of "devil possession," for instance, should no more be allowed to discredit all religious feeling than a case of double vision or of color blindness discredits all perception, or a fallacious argument all reasoning. The colored revival meeting where people get the "powers," the erotic trances of the pathological, the violent extremes of the conversion case artificially induced by imitation and contagion, these belong to the more primitive state, to a lower plane of religious feeling, just as the belief in witchcraft belonged to a cruder form of thought. The only kind of religious feeling which is really native to a cultured community is the calm and spontaneous type to which I have so often referred. Its normal condition is best expressed by a phrase that has lately come into common use: "Religion as a life." It is best seen in the thousands of cheerful, wholesome, sometimes commonplace people, who, though very much like others in most respects, meet their problems and look out upon their world in the light of an inner experience whose authority they never doubt. This belief in their God determines the whole tenor of their lives; "by these things men live." For it is the basis on which one's belief is founded that largely determines its nature and its value. Pope's famous verse, —

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right,"

has been hotly attacked and as resolutely defended; one party insisting that belief is the most important

thing in life, the other that it is of no practical significance. Probably both are right, for they are talking of different things. It makes, indeed, little difference to life what beliefs of the abstract and purely intellectual sort you hold. Whether you accept the metaphysical attributes of God as maintained by scholasticism may have no more effect on your life than the fact that you have or have not studied the integral calculus. But it is a different matter with the belief that has worked itself down into the marrow of your bones and has made itself organic to your vital impulses and needs.

IV

I have tried to describe the belief of the Religion of Feeling — the belief that characterizes the deeply religious mind. But "many are the wand-bearers; few are the Bacchoi." [1] Only a portion of the religious community knows the experience to which I refer. It may be that half — possibly much more than half — of those who are commonly known as religious people are without any intimation of their own as to what is meant by such an experience, and the proportion among non-churchgoers is, of course, very much larger. One of these latter probably represents most of his class when he writes to the *Outlook* as follows: "I am much in doubt if I fully understand either intellectually or by experience what spirituality means. If it means a certain mental

[1] Orphic verse.

attitude that you call communion with God, and love for Him whom I cannot see like love for one that I *can* see — if it means an attitude of mind that finds great delight in prayer to God when I know that He will not deviate from His fixed laws, then I am not in it to a very appreciable extent."[1] Thousands of people like the writer of this letter are nourishing what faith they have partly on habit, partly on the old arguments, partly on the authority of the Bible, and partly on the authority of the more mystical members of the community. It is these people who are affected — and who will be constantly more and more affected — by the overthrow of the old arguments and the old authorities. We cannot blind ourselves to the fact that we are in the midst — or it may be only at the beginning — of a great religious crisis. When the old props are altogether knocked out from under the non-mystical portion of the community, what will be the result?

On a superficial view the result seems obvious enough. In Europe, particularly in Germany, a spirit of violent hostility to religion[2] has spread

[1] *Outlook*, May 12, 1906, p. 64.

[2] This is of course largely due to the popular distrust of the Established Church; but Church and religion are largely identified in the minds of the people. A significant incident is reported in the *Leipziger Tageblatt* for March 4, 1906, namely, an account of a public debate between a certain Dr. Horneffer, a disciple of Nietzsche, and several clergymen. The sympathy of the audience seemed to be chiefly with Dr. Horneffer, whose address abounded in sentiments like the following: "Es ist eine nicht wegzuleugnende

through a large portion of the community; while in America, though there is little open hostility to religion, there is at least a rapidly growing indifference[1] to all forms of public worship and observance. Go into almost any church on a Sunday and look around. Where are the men? Go to almost any prayer-meeting. Where are the men? On a more thorough consideration of the matter, however, the falling off of church attendance is not necessarily a sign of a falling off in religious belief. Some may even stay away just because they are religious. It is a sign of progress rather than of decadence if people have

Tatsache dass der Gottesglaube auch in der Gemeinde stark erschüttert ist. (*Starker Beifall.*) Es ist höchste Zeit dass wir einmal Schluss machen mit Vorstellungen die uns keine Lebensgehalt mehr geben können."

[1] This is evident even to outside observers. One of them writes: "So wächst, vor allem in den grossen Städten Nordamerikas, ein modernes Heidentum heran, das den Gottessohn nur darum nicht leugnet, weil es ihn überhaupt nicht kennt." — WILHELM VON POLENZ, "Das Land der Zukunft," p. 343.

Mr. George Frederick Wells, who has recently studied the condition of the rural church in one of the New England states, writes in the *Outlook* for August 18, 1906: "Indifference to the Church is the great difficulty. Less than one half of the people of that state are ever at church, and in some communities less than one quarter are said to be either adherents or attendants. At the center of the cause of the social problem of the rural church is the loss of faith on the part of the people, not in the doctrines or theology of the church primarily, but in the *life* of the church." Mr. Wells also points out among the signs of the times "the alarming decay of home religion" and "the increasing deficiency in the supply of efficient clergymen." — "The Country Church: Its Social Problem." *Outlook*, LXXXIII, 893–895.

learned they can be religious outside the Church as well as in it. And interest in religious matters is still tremendously strong. The papers and periodicals of Europe and America are constantly on the watch for bits of theological gossip. Harnack's "Das Wesen des Christenthums" has been called for in upwards of sixty thousand copies in the original and in numerous translations; Delitzsch's "Babel und Bibel," in one hundred thousand copies, and scores of replies to it have been written and read. The psychological atmosphere has not for years been so laden with interest in religious questions as it is to-day.

Still, it must be remembered that all this interest in religion may betoken the downfall of belief quite as well as the opposite. I am inclined to think the *New York Sun* was right when, in its issue of June 4, 1904, it said: "The reason why men do not go to church is obvious enough: they are not interested in the Church because they are not interested in religion. They have not the deep and vital religious faith of which church worship is the outward expression. They may think they believe, but actually they do not believe in the religion they profess."

V

What the future of religion is to be no one can tell. Of this, however, I think we may be sure: religious belief will stand or fall with what I have called

the Religion of Feeling. Personal inner experience, the unreasoned (though by no means unreasonable) religious attitude toward the universe, is the only source from which religion in these days of naturalism and agnosticism, of indifference and hostility, can draw its life. Here alone is something independent of literary criticism, of scientific discovery, of philosophic thought. From here alone spring religious convictions that will hear of no denial, that bear their own passports and refuse to be discredited. "There is a difference," says Emerson, "between one and another hour of life in their authority and subsequent effect. Our faith comes in moments, our vice is habitual. Yet there is a depth in those brief moments which constrains us to ascribe more reality to them than to all other experiences." This, as I have so often said, is the universal testimony of the religious consciousness; and the time is coming and is, I believe, not far distant when this inner experience, this spiritual insight, will be recognized as the only sure basis of religious belief.

What will be the content of such a religion? Its beliefs, as pointed out above, must be formulated and made articulate by thought. It must forever express itself in forms and symbols. These forms and symbols will always vary with different peoples and different times, and they will arise and succeed one another and pass away in the future as they have in the past. The concept of God will continue to vary with the individual. But beneath all these

changing and contradictory manifestations will flow the one life of the inner religious experience. This inner experience, I say, is really one; all the mystics speak one language and profess one faith. For while some commune with Brahman, some with their own larger and purer selves, some with the "Tao," some with Jesus or with Mary, some with the *stille Wüste* or the *ungeschaffener Abgrund* or the Oversoul, all testify to the conviction — or, as they phrase it, to the immediate experience — that their little lives lead out into a larger Life not altogether identical with theirs but essentially of the same nature. Beyond this in their descriptions of it they vary, many of them insisting that it is for us unknowable. But they all agree with Plotinus that, though "God escapes our knowledge, He does not escape us." This evidence which all the mystics bear to a vast reservoir of life beyond us, which is like ours and with which our life may make connections, is the one dogma of the Religion of Feeling. And as the many dogmas of the Religion of Thought follow the many dogmas of the Religion of Primitive Credulity into the museums and the history books — the ghost world of departed faiths — this one dogma, if religion is really to last, will be seen in its true light as the one doctrine of the real Religion of Humanity, because it is founded on the very life of the race.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions at length and in detail. *Do not give philosophical generalizations, but your own personal experience.*

1. What does religion mean to you personally? Is it
   - (1) A belief that something exists?
   - (2) An emotional experience?
   - (3) A general attitude of the will toward God or toward righteousness?
   - (4) Or something else?

If it has several elements, which is for you the most important?

2. What do you mean by God?
   - (1) Is He a person? If so, what do you mean by His being a person?
   - (2) Or is He only a force?
   - (3) Or is God an attitude of the universe toward you?

How do you apprehend His relation to mankind and to you personally?

If your position on any or all of these matters is uncertain, please state the fact.

3. Why do you believe in God? Is it

(1) From some argument?

Or (2) because you have experienced His presence?

Or (3) from authority, such as that of the Bible or of some prophetic person?

Or (4) from any other reason?

4. Or do you not so much *believe* in God as want to *use* Him? Do you accept Him not so much as a real existent Being, but rather as an ideal to live by? If you should become thoroughly convinced that there was no God, would it make any great difference in your life — either in happiness, morality, or in other respects?

5. Is God very real to you; as real as an earthly friend, though different?

Do you feel that you have experienced His presence? If so, please describe what you mean by such an experience. How vague and how distinct is it? How does it affect you mentally and physically?

If you have had no such experience, do you accept the testimony of others who claim to have felt God's presence directly?

Please answer this question with special care and in as great detail as possible.

6. Do you pray, and if so, why? That is, is it purely from habit and social custom, or do you really believe that God hears your prayers?

Is prayer with you one-sided or two-sided; *i.e.* do you sometimes feel that in prayer you receive

something — such as strength or the divine spirit — from God? Is it a real communion?

7. What do you mean by "spirituality"? Describe a typical spiritual person.

8. Do you believe in personal immortality? If so, why?

9. Do you accept the Bible as *authority* in religious matters? Are your religious faith and your religious life based on it? If so, how would your belief in God and your life toward Him and your fellow-men be affected by loss of faith in the *authority* of the Bible?

10. What do you mean by "a religious experience"?

APPENDIX B

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[1] It is, of course, impossible to include in this list any of the works upon the historical and anthropological subjects dealt with in this book.

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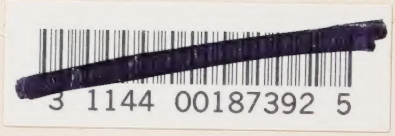
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